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The 1985 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll

PAGE TABLE OF CONTENTS

10 **1.0 Overview — The American Woman in 1985**

10 1.1 From Women's Rights to Women's Progress
11 1.2 Women in the Working World
12 1.3 Women and Their Families
13 1.4 The Future of the American Woman

15 **2.0 The Changing Status of Women**

16 2.1 Improving the Status of the American Woman
- 2.1.1 Women on the Move
- 2.1.2 Moving into the Future
- 2.1.3 Gaining Respect

20 2.2 The Barriers to Women's Achievement
- 2.2.1 The Male Advantage
- 2.2.2 When Is It Better To Be a Man?
- 2.2.3 Discrimination in the Job Market
- 2.2.4 The Challenges of Womanhood

29 2.3 The Women's Movement and the Equal Rights Amendment
- 2.3.1 The Women's Movement and the Working Woman
- 2.3.2 The Women's Movement and the Homemaker
- 2.3.3 The Future of the Equal Rights Amendment

33 **3.0 Marriage and Divorce**

34 3.1 Getting Married
- 3.1.1 Is Marriage the Best Way of Life?
- 3.1.2 The New Marriage
- 3.1.3 Is Marriage a Prerequisite for Happiness?
- 3.1.4 Reasons for Marrying
- 3.1.5 The Ideal Age for Marrying

40 3.2 Being Married
- 3.2.1 The Institution of Marriage
- 3.2.2 Who Sacrifices More Freedom?
- 3.2.3 What Makes a Good Marriage?
- 3.2.4 How Decisions Are Handled
- 3.2.5 Should Husbands Pay Wives for Housework?

49 3.3 Getting Divorced
- 3.3.1 The Acceptability of Divorce
- 3.3.2 Alimony
- 3.3.3 Palimony
- 3.3.4 Child Custody

58 **4.0 Children**

58 4.1 Children and Marriage
60 4.2 The Ideal Number of Children

63 **5.0 Women and Careers**

64 5.1 The Will to Work
- 5.1.1 Careers and the Married Woman
- 5.1.2 The Hard Choice: Work or Home?
- 5.1.3 Mothers and Careers
- 5.1.4 Who Are the Working Women?

71 5.2 The Pleasure of Work
5.2.1 Is It a Career or Just a Job?
5.2.2 Money Is Not the Only Object
5.2.3 Personal Satisfaction on the Job

77 5.3 Competing in the Workplace
5.3.1 The Equal-Opportunity Workplace
5.3.2 The Woman as Boss
5.3.3 Attitudes Toward Colleagues

81 **6.0 Combining Career and Family**

82 6.1 Harmony in the Household
6.1.1 Are Husbands Supportive of Working Wives?
6.1.2 Do Men Feel Threatened If Wives Earn More?
6.1.3 Is There Less Time for Children?
6.1.4 Are Children Worse Off When Mother Works?
6.1.5 What Gets Slighted When Women Work?

89 6.2 Household Priorities: Finances and Chores
6.2.1 Career Conflicts: Who Moves, Who Stays?
6.2.2 Finances in a Two-Income Home
6.2.3 Doing the Chores
6.2.4 A New Role for Men?

95 **7.0 Day-Care for Children**

96 7.1 Bringing Up Baby
7.1.1 Which Women Have Children?
7.1.2 Who Cares for Them?
7.1.3 Are Parents Satisfied With Child-Care Arrangements

101 7.2 The Future of Day-Care Centers
7.2.1 Public Support for More Centers
7.2.2 With More Day-Care, Would More Mothers Work?

103 **8.0 Changing Values and the Social Scene**

104 8.1 The New Morality
8.1.1 Evolving Sexual Standards
8.1.2 Effects of the New Morality
8.1.3 A Double Standard for Parents and Children?

112 8.2 The Dating Game
8.2.1 Should a Woman Call a Man for a Date?
8.2.2 On a Date, Who Should Pay?
8.2.3 Women in Social Situations
8.2.4 Women's Attractiveness
8.2.5 Qualities Admired in Women and Men

121 8.3 Growing Old
8.3.1 Age Groups: What Are the Good Years?
8.3.2 The Bad Birthdays

125 **Appendix—Survey Methodology**

PAGE

LIST OF TABLES

16	2.1	Efforts to strengthen women's status: overall figures: 1970-1985
17	2.2	Efforts to strengthen women's status: breakdown by demographic groups
18	2.3	Will women's roles continue to change?
19	2.4	Respect for women
20	2.5	Is it more advantageous to be a man or a woman? Totals for 1974, 1980 and 1985
21	2.6	Is it more advantageous to be a man or a woman? Breakdown by demographic groups
22	2.7	When is it better to be a man? Women's opinions
23	2.8	When is it better to be a man? Men's opinions
24	2.9	In what areas do women experience discrimination?
25	2.10	The importance of a loving husband: 1985 compared to 1974
26	2.11	Getting ahead in the world: must a woman be better than a man?
27	2.12	Is being a woman a barrier to self-fulfillment?
28	2.13	Does it take as much intelligence to raise children as to hold a job?
28	2.14	What are women's prospects?
29	2.15	The women's movement: has it helped or hindered working women?
30	2.16	The women's movement: has it helped or hindered homemakers?
31	2.17	Opinions on the Equal Rights Amendment
34	3.1	Living situations of women and men
35	3.2	Ranking of the most satisfying lifestyles
36	3.3	Can women and men be happy without being married?
37	3.4	Can women and men be happy without being married? Breakdown by demographic groups
38	3.5	Reasons for marrying
39	3.6	The ideal age for marrying
40	3.7	The institution of marriage: is it stronger or weaker than in the past?
41	3.8	Evaluating the institution of marriage: breakdown by demographic groups
42	3.9	In marriage, who sacrifices more freedom?
43	3.10	What makes a good marriage?
44	3.11	Who makes the decisions?

45	3.12	Should husbands pay wives for housework?
46	3.13	Should husbands pay wives for housework? Breakdown by demographic groups
47	3.14	Men and women estimate the dollar value of housework
48	3.15	Estimating the dollar value of housework: breakdown by demographic groups
49	3.16	Is divorce acceptable?
51	3.17	Should a divorced woman receive alimony?
52	3.18	Should a wife pay alimony to a former husband?
53	3.19	Should a woman receive palimony?
54	3.20	Which parent should get custody?
55	3.21	Under what circumstances should a father pay child support?
58	4.1	Can a childless marriage be a happy marriage?
59	4.2	Can a childless marriage be a happy marriage? Breakdown by demographic groups
60	4.3	The desired size of the ideal family
61	4.4	Summary: the number of children people have or plan to have
62	4.5	How many children? Breakdown by demographic groups
64	5.1	Preferences for marriage, children and career
65	5.2	Preferences for marriage, children and career: breakdown by demographic groups
66	5.3	Preference for a job compared to staying home
67	5.4	Preference for a job compared to staying home: breakdown by demographic groups
68	5.5	Should women with children work?
69	5.6	How many women work?
71	5.7	Women's work: a career or "just a job"?
72	5.8	Women's work: a career or "just a job"? Breakdown by demographic groups
73	5.9	Would you continue working if financially secure?
74	5.10	Would you continue working if financially secure? Breakdown by demographic groups
75	5.11	What do you get from working, aside from money?
76	5.12	What do you get from working, aside from money? Breakdown by demographic groups
77	5.13	Are women's chances on the job equal to men's?
79	5.14	Feelings about on-the-job support
83	6.1	What if a woman earns more than her husband?

85	6.2	What gets slighted when women work?
87	6.3	How do women feel about working?
88	6.4	What do women give up when they work?
89	6.5	Should a woman quit her job if her husband is relocated?
90	6.6	Should a man quit his job if his wife is relocated?
91	6.7	How is money handled in two-income households?
93	6.8	Who does the household chores?
94	6.9	Does a husband who stays home lose respect?
97	7.1	Which women have children?
99	7.2	Who cares for the children when mother works?
100	7.3	Are parents satisfied with child-care arrangements?
101	7.4	Public support for more day-care centers
102	7.5	With more day-care centers, would more mothers work?
105	8.1	Attitudes toward sexual standards and behavior
106	8.2	Effects of the new morality
107	8.3	Effects of the new morality: breakdown by demographic groups
109	8.4	Attitudes about sexual freedom: breakdown by demographic groups
110	8.5	What is acceptable behavior for a daughter?
111	8.6	What is acceptable behavior for a son?
113	8.7	Should a woman call a man for a date?
114	8.8	Should a woman call a man for a date? Breakdown by demographic groups
115	8.9	Who should pay for a date?
116	8.10	Are you comfortable if a woman pays the check?
117	8.11	Are you more comfortable socially with women who work or with women who don't work?
118	8.12	What kinds of women do men find appealing?
120	8.13	Personal qualities most admired by women and by men
121	8.14	Age groups: what are the good years?
122	8.15	Age groups: what are the good years? Breakdown by demographic groups
123	8.16	Which birthdays are the most dreaded?

1

Overview—
The American Woman in 1985

The American Woman of 1985

1.0 The first Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll was conducted in 1970, at the start of a decade of dramatic changes in women's attitudes and beliefs, behavior and status in American society.

As readers of the 1985 survey will quickly discover, these changes have continued unabated. Whether it be her relations with men or other women, with her children or with her professional colleagues, women in 1985 have very different values and lead very different kinds of lives than they did in the 1970s.

But if the 1970s were marked by rapid gains in women's equality, both actual and perceived, women in the 1980s appear to be consolidating and strengthening these gains instead of initiating new battles over new issues of equal rights. They are also adjusting themselves to the new and greater responsibilities and challenges they face because of their improved status *vis à vis* men.

Adjustments are inevitable if only because a large number of women now pursue two jobs — that of homemaker and that of wage earner. In a dramatic shift from the sentiment prevailing in 1970, women in 1985 strongly favor the concept of the "working marriage." Its major components are children, and a husband and wife who work outside the home and share the responsibilities of homemaking and child rearing.

American women believe that the components of such a marriage are not only desirable but central to the fuller, more satisfying life they seek. Nonetheless, these components also present a weighty and, at times, frustrating challenge — how to cope with the competing demands of marriage, children and work, especially when the woman continues to bear most or all of the responsibilities associated with homemaking and child rearing. How this issue is resolved will redefine both women's and men's roles in society, and our concept of the traditional American family as well.

From Women's Rights to Women's Progress

1.1 Are further changes in women's roles inevitable? Despite major upheavals in attitudes, behavior and basic status over the past 15 years, three-quarters of the American people believe that women's roles will continue to evolve; moreover, majorities of both women and men believe they should.

With these changes has come greater respect for women, in steadily increasing degrees since the early 1970s, and paralleling women's rising participation in activities traditionally associated with men. Despite such gains, or perhaps because of them, large majorities of women and men favor further efforts to strengthen women's status. And for the first time in the history of the Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll, women — confident enough to be their own most ardent advocates — are more enthusiastic about such efforts than men. Quite a change from the past!

In the eyes of many, sexual discrimination persists, yet it also appears that the women's movement has changed men's consciousness: for while the perception of discrimination has remained steady among women for the past five years, it has actually increased among men.

That it is more freely acknowledged suggests that in the future, discrimination will be fought even more fiercely than it has been in the past. Society may have confirmed women's basic rights; still at issue, however, is how completely and how quickly women will exercise those rights across the complete range of their own interests, not solely in the workplace.

As shown by their increasing numbers in the work force and the positions they hold, women have smashed some of the barriers that stand in the way of their employment and professional advancement. Now that they are working outside the home, however, how will they cope with their household and family responsibilities?

Women in the Working World

1.2

Not too long ago, the most advanced job many women could look forward to in the male-dominated world of work was secretary to the CEO. Two events in the 1980s symbolize the strides in status that women have made. In 1983, Sally Ride became the first American woman ever to take a trip to outer space; and in 1984, Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman ever nominated by a major political party as a candidate for Vice President.

Today, for the first time ever, a majority of women work either full-time or part-time outside the home. If they had to choose, a majority of women would opt for a job over staying at home. Indeed, almost three-quarters of all women either work outside the home or intend to.

Yet though they may have moved into a traditionally male domain — a workplace outside the home — women have not necessarily assimilated men's attitudes about it. Many women don't think about work as men do. Fewer women than men, for example, think of their work as a career, yet more women than men derive great satisfaction from their work, even if it is "just a job." Furthermore, women are more willing than men to sacrifice their work for their families or for their spouse's career.

As more and more women work, the concept of work and the meaning of "career" may change, but work outside the home has taken root as a key component of women's lives. Nearly two-thirds of all women — 63% — want to combine work, marriage and children. Only a bare majority — 52% — did in 1974.

Of course, millions of American women do not work outside the home; and while many of them wish they did, few would want to sacrifice family or marriage to their jobs. Even those who seek a form of personal satisfaction through their work want to preserve strong family ties. Doing so, however, requires from both men and women a realistic appreciation of the complexity of a homemaker's tasks, and a greater sense of shared initiative and mutual responsibility.

Women and Their Families

13

Marriage remains as important as ever to the contemporary American woman: nine out of 10 women think it is better to be married than not, and this attitude has changed little over the past 15 years. Yet there is evidence that the *kind* of marriage that women want is changing. First, fewer people are marrying today than in 1970 and when they do, they tend to do it later in life. Second, more and more women postpone marriage to pursue jobs. Third, most women strongly believe that a woman can have a complete and happy life if she remains single, even though they themselves may want to get married someday. Finally, older and more experienced women's ideas about marriage differ from their younger counterparts, including ideas about raising children or even having children in the first place. Indeed, four out of five women say that children are not essential to a happy marriage.

But by far the most important change is in women's attitudes about the organization of married life. Most women now believe that household responsibilities should be mutual, that the efforts of wife and husband should be shared. No longer is it appropriate to stereotype feminine and masculine tasks. According to today's woman, equal opportunity without an equal division of labor is no longer enough; for her to leverage her opportunities, there must first be a more equal division of labor.

The Poll shows that men may be sincere in believing that women should enjoy the same benefits of working as they themselves have enjoyed; but also, that they have not made changes at home to encourage this.

Husbands may support their wives' decision to work and even think it fine for their wives to earn more money than they do, but in many respects, the husbands' careers still take precedence over their wives' work.

Salaries of working women may be pooled in a common household account, but men still like to pay for things.

Men might *respect* other men who stay home with the children instead of working, but they themselves do not assist much with the household chores.

The result is that, beyond filling her obligations to family and work, today's working mother has little time for herself or for social activities. Yet in spite of this — or perhaps because of it — she wants a marriage of shared responsibility: a working marriage in which many of the traditional distinctions between a woman's role and a man's are eliminated.

Above all, she wants equality in the home as well as in the workplace.

1.4

The Future of the American Woman

Women's attitudes, as well as men's about women, have never changed as rapidly as in the past 15 years. The content of society's ongoing debate about women's roles also appears to be changing. Situations that both women and men once took for granted or even ignored are now more closely scrutinized and questioned. New values, whether they concern a woman's role in the workplace or her legal rights, independence, social status or sexual freedom, have routed old ones. While the struggle for equal rights will continue, considerable energy will also be focused on consolidating recent gains. How to make time for her growing responsibilities, and how to manage that time effectively, are two of the biggest challenges facing women today.

Until now, the greatest attention has been paid to women gaining access to the man's world. Men have been much slower to adopt roles traditionally associated with women, e.g., full-time homemaking or child rearing, but in both attitudes and behavior measured in the 1985 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll, we can see such trends accelerating. Some might question the necessity for such changes, and argue against them because, it is felt, they threaten the ideals and values of the traditional family. Some welcome the changes as a necessary response to the realities of economic and social life. Some, with one eye on the past and one on the future, are ambivalent and uncertain.

The Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll does not engage in that debate. Instead, we can only state that the changes in attitudes and beliefs recorded over the 15-year history of the Poll have generated real changes in the society in which we live, and will continue to do so in the future. And, regardless of the direction in which those changes take us, to reshape our society will require further changes of consciousness about the roles of women as well as men, and further compromises between the sexes in the quest for a new world.

The first phase of women's struggle for social equality is drawing to a close, and a new one is beginning. To forecast the future from current trends is always risky and problematic, but one thing is certain: whatever shape the future takes, women will play a greater role than ever in bringing it to pass.

2

The Changing Status of Women

Improving the Status of the American Woman

2.1 The social status of women in 1985 — be it in the workplace, in the home or in the public eye — is much different from what it was in 1970. And the majority of Americans believe that further change, generally for the better, is inevitable.

Women on the Move

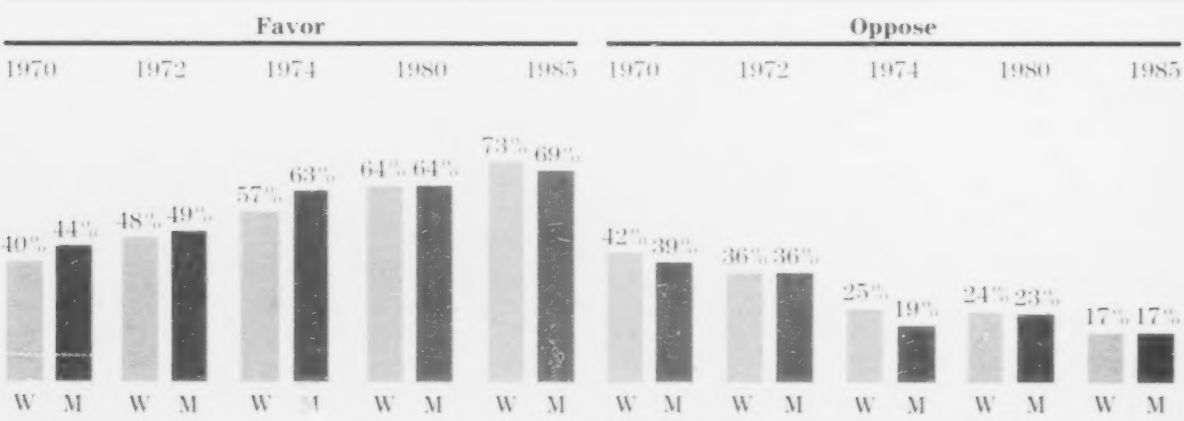
2.1.1 One of the consistent — and ironic — findings of the Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll over the years has been that more men than women have favored efforts to improve women's status.

Today, for the first time in the 15-year history of the Poll, a greater percentage of women than men — 73% compared to 69% — favor efforts to improve women's status.

Question:

Do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?

TABLE 2.1 ***Efforts to strengthen women's status***



Support for improving the status of women is both broad and deep. In 1970, majorities of only three groups of women — single, divorced or separated, and black women — favored efforts to improve women's status. Today, majorities among all groups of women, whether young or old, single or married, black or white, support such efforts.

Question:

There has been much talk recently about changing women's status in society today. On the whole, do you favor or oppose most of the efforts to strengthen and change women's status in society today?

TABLE 2.2

Efforts to strengthen women's status: breakdown by demographic groups

	1970			1985		
	Favor %	Oppose %	Not sure %	Favor %	Oppose %	Not sure %
Total women	40	42	18	73	17	10
Single	53	33	14	84	8	8
Married	38	45	17	70	19	11
Divorced separated	61	27	12	84	11	5
Widowed	36	41	23	61	24	15
White	37	46	17	72	18	10
Black	60	20	20	78	11	11
18 to 29	46	39	15	80	12	8
30 to 39	40	44	16	76	16	8
40 to 49	39	43	18	76	16	8
50 and over	35	45	20	64	22	14
Non-high school graduate	36	38	26	63	21	16
High school graduate	38	45	17	72	17	11
College	44	40	16	79	14	7
Northeast	41	40	19	80	12	8
Midwest	38	46	16	68	18	14
South	39	41	20	71	20	9
West	42	43	15	74	16	10

Moving into the Future

2.1.2

Three-quarters of both women and men think that women's roles in the future will be different from their roles now. Very few — only one in 10 — believe that women will revert to more traditional roles or that no further changes are on the horizon.

Moreover, majorities of both men and women believe that women's roles *should* continue to change, even if the consequences are unpredictable. This vote in favor of dynamic change has risen substantially over the past five years, up by 12 percentage points among women and nine among men.

What kind of change lies ahead? Elsewhere in this report, in findings about women's evolving attitudes toward work and family, we will discover some clues.

Question:

Do you think that women's roles in society will continue to change in the years to come, or have women's roles changed as much as they're going to, or do you think there will be a movement back to more traditional women's roles in the years to come?

TABLE 2.3

Will women's roles continue to change?

	1980		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Women's roles:				
Will continue to change	72	74	76	75
Changed as much as they're going to	12	10	11	12
Will move back to more traditional roles	11	10	10	9
Don't know	5	6	3	4
Should continue to change	57	58	69	67
Change gone as far as it should	23	21	16	20
Change already gone too far	15	13	10	10
Don't know	6	8	5	4

Gaining Respect

2.1.3

Women have never been more respected. Today, 60% of women and 61% of men — as opposed to 38% of women and 40% of men in 1970 — believe that women are more respected now than they were 10 years ago. Both women's and men's opinions on this matter have evolved at practically the same pace.

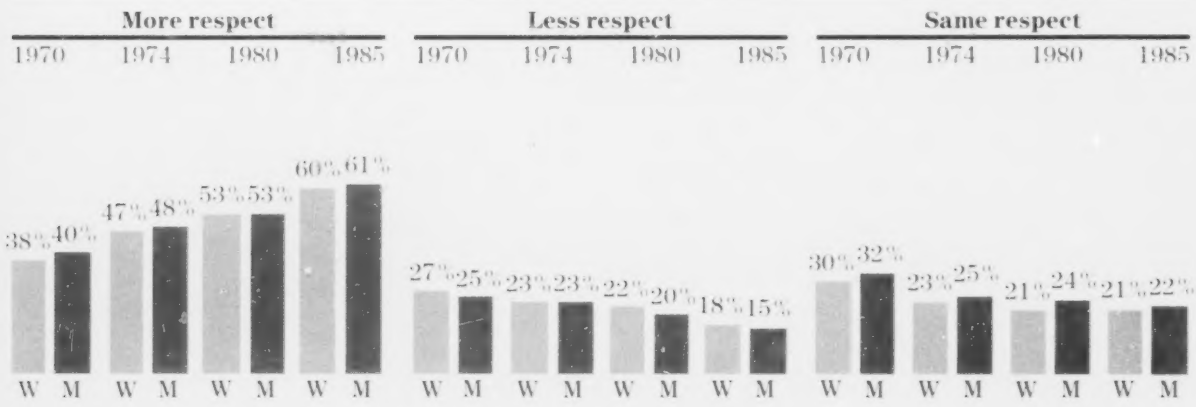
Seventy percent of women in the 18- to 29-year-old age bracket, 70% of those with college experience and 71% of those who are members of households in the highest income brackets are likely to believe that women today are more respected than in the past. On many issues in this Poll, we find a similar alliance of young women, women with more education and women in the higher income brackets.

Question:

On the whole, do you feel that, compared with 10 years ago, women are now looked on with more respect as individual human beings, looked on with less respect, or about the same respect as 10 years ago?

TABLE 2.4

Respect for women



The Barriers to Women's Achievement

2.2 In many areas of social, political and job activities, women's progress is still barred. Although respect for women has risen dramatically, the world is still a man's world. The public's recognition of that fact, however — that men have the advantage — is growing. This willingness to admit openly that men have the edge suggests two things about issues of women's equality: the public's awareness of these issues has increased and people are more ready to deal with the issues.

The Male Advantage

2.2.1 Three times in 11 years Americans have been asked by Virginia Slims if women or men have more advantages in our society. Three times, with increasing conviction, both women and men have said that the advantage lies in being a man. Today, about half of all Americans say that the man is favored. In 1974, only 31% of women and 42% of men thought this was true.

Note that men's *actual* advantages may not have increased, although this might be so in some cases. What is certainly true is that public *consciousness* of men's long-standing advantages has grown.

Question:

All things considered, in our society today, do you think there are more advantages in being a man, or more advantages in being a woman, or that there are no more advantages in being one than the other?

TABLE 2.5

Is it more advantageous to be a man or a woman? Totals for 1974, 1980 and 1985

	1974		1980		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
More advantages in being a man	31	42	43	43	49	51
More advantages in being a woman	8	5	9	10	8	8
No more advantages in being one than the other	56	48	45	44	41	39
Don't know	5	5	3	3	2	2

When Is It Better to Be a Man?

2.2.2

In the working world and in applying for credit, men and women agree the advantage lies with men. In the social world, on the other hand — among friends and at parties — neither men nor women perceive a male advantage.

Both women (69%) and men (61%) agree that a man can get a mortgage or other major loan more easily than a woman. Virtually no one suggests that a woman ever has an advantage in such situations. Perceptions of discrimination also persist in the job market. (See Section 2.2.3)

TABLE 2.6

Is it more advantageous to be a man or a woman? Breakdown by demographic groups

	More advantages in being a man %	More advantages in being a woman %	No more advantages in being one than other %	Don't know %
Total women — 1985	49	8	41	2
Single	50	11	37	1
Married	49	6	43	2
Divorced/separated	59	10	29	2
Widowed	39	9	46	5
White	49	7	42	2
Black	50	11	34	4
18 to 29	48	10	41	2
30 to 39	53	8	37	1
40 to 49	56	6	35	3
50 and over	45	7	45	3
Non-high school graduate	42	9	45	3
High school graduate	53	7	38	2
College	50	8	41	2
1974	31	8	56	5

In social situations, on the other hand, men's advantages are less pronounced. Pluralities or majorities of both women and men think that a single woman is as likely as a single man to be included in a dinner party, to meet someone of the opposite sex, or to get good service in a restaurant.

Note, however, that women's and men's opinions on some of these matters are strikingly different. Women are three times as likely as men to say that the advantage lies with the man. About half of all men think that neither sex has the advantage in meeting someone of the opposite sex (54%) or getting good service at a restaurant (57%).

Furthermore, more men think that a single woman is more likely to be invited to a dinner party than a single man; the reverse is true among women.

The overall message of these findings? *Social* discrimination, as opposed to professional discrimination, is not viewed as a pressing issue. Sometimes, men may appear to have the upper hand socially, but their advantages are slight and probably waning.

Question:

Here are a number of different situations. (Card shown respondent.) For each one would you tell me if you think it would be more advantageous to be a man, or more advantageous to be a woman, or whether it wouldn't make any difference? First, (each item read to respondent).

TABLE 2.7

When is it better to be a man?
Women's opinions

	A man	A woman	No difference	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Getting a mortgage or other major loan	69	1	27	2
Feeling comfortable at a party if you go alone	45	8	44	3
Being included in a dinner party if you're single	34	13	49	4
Meeting someone of the opposite sex	35	11	51	3
Getting good service at a restaurant if you're alone	32	11	54	2

TABLE 2.8

When is it better to be a man?
Men's opinions

	A man	A woman	No difference	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
Getting a mortgage or other major loan	61	1	35	3
Feeling comfortable at a party if you go alone	39	12	45	5
Being included in a dinner party if you're single	17	29	49	5
Meeting someone of the opposite sex	22	20	54	4
Getting good service at a restaurant if you're alone	20	20	57	3

Discrimination in the Job Market

2.2.3

According to the findings of the Poll, being female is not an asset for someone seeking a top job as a professional, businessperson, government worker or skilled laborer. Since the early 1970s, both men and women have agreed that discrimination against women in the job market, particularly at the high-paying end, is very real.

Today, a majority of women believe that barriers still hinder them from reaching the top. About half of all men agree. With on-the-job experience, the perception and awareness of discrimination increase. Sixty-two percent of working women who are employed full-time believe that obstacles prevent them from getting top jobs in business and government, compared with 57% of all women. Similarly, working women are more likely to point to discrimination in the professions (61%) than are all women (55%).

In other fields, perceptions of discrimination vary. Very few people think that women have difficulty getting white-collar or clerical jobs. (That clerical positions are traditionally low-paying and overwhelmingly held by women has sparked a national debate on the concept of 'comparable worth.')

For the highest positions in the arts, women appear to enjoy opportunities comparable to men. Only one-fifth of all women, and even fewer men, believe that discrimination is a factor here. Arguably, artistic talent is gender-blind.

For the first time in the history of the Poll, Virginia Slims measured the perception of discrimination against women in the military. Among those who ventured an opinion (23% of women and 15% of men did not), roughly two-fifths of all women and half of all men think that the Armed Forces are unfair to women. But more than one-third of all women and about two-fifths of all men disagree.

The Poll shows that women's and men's attitudes about discrimination have evolved at a different pace. During the decade of the '70s, women's perceptions of discrimination in most of the areas examined increased by five percentage points. Since 1980, however,

Women's views on this matter have changed very little. Men's perception of discrimination, on the other hand, changed very little during the '70s but has increased about five percentage points in the '80s.

What explains this mismatch? Perhaps this: that women had to become aware of and articulate the problems confronting them before men could. Women became aware of discrimination through the women's movement, their own personal experience in the labor force, and as witnesses to discrimination faced by their daughters. It took longer for men to acknowledge the barriers and see how they inhibited women's advancement.

Question:

Do you feel women are discriminated against or not in (each item read to respondent)?

TABLE 2.9

In what areas do women experience discrimination?

	1972		1980		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Agree that women are discriminated against in:						
Getting a college education	8	6	7	7	10	8
Getting white-collar/clerical job	17	15	13	11	14	12
Obtaining top jobs in arts	19	13	20	14	20	15
Getting into graduate/professional school	*	*	27	24	24	23
Obtaining jobs in the military**	*	*	*	*	42	46
Being given leadership responsibility in groups with both men and women	38	36	45	36	46	44
Obtaining loans/mortgages/charge accounts in their own names	*	*	51	43	47	39
Getting skilled labor jobs	43	43	48	46	51	49
Obtaining top jobs in professions	47	43	52	43	55	49
Obtaining executive jobs in business	52	49	57	48	57	53
Obtaining top jobs in government	51	42	55	44	57	48

* Less than .5 percent

** 23% of women, 15% of men don't know how to judge the military with respect to discrimination against women. On all other measures, the percent who do not know never exceeds 13% ("obtaining top jobs in the arts").

The significance of these differences should not, however, be exaggerated. In the early 1970s, substantial numbers of men *did* recognize the problem of sexual discrimination even though they may not have experienced it directly. And considered from a long-term perspective, the changes since then have been minimal. But the findings do suggest that, through the remainder of the 1980s, men's opinions on this issue will continue to move in the direction of women's opinions.

The Challenges of Womanhood

2.2.4

Increasing self-confidence, a willingness to acknowledge their disadvantages *vis à vis* men, and a drive to surmount discriminatory barriers: such traits are contributing to a new definition of what it means to be a woman in America.

Today's woman puts a high priority on self-fulfillment. A decade ago, it was less important: 64% of women then ranked having a loving husband higher than self-fulfillment. Only 48% do so today. Moreover, the number of women who do *not* feel that having "a loving husband" is more important than "making it on my own" has doubled since 1974.

TABLE 2.10

The importance of a loving husband: 1985 compared to 1974

	1974	1985
	Women %	Women %
Having a loving husband who is able to take care of me is much more important to me than making it on my own.		
Feel that way strongly	64	48
To a certain extent	19	25
Don't feel that way	13	25
Not sure	3	2

Among women aged 18 to 29, opinions as to the importance of a loving husband versus self-fulfillment are about evenly divided. Thirty-four percent feel strongly that a loving husband is most important; 32% feel that way to a certain extent; and 31% — six points more than the national average — do not feel that way at all.

Among college-educated women, the difference is even more striking. A plurality — 38% — do not feel that a loving husband is more important than self-fulfillment; only 34% feel strongly that he is. Among women currently employed, opinions are divided equally: 35% of them opt for a loving husband, 34% for self-fulfillment. The opinions of these subgroups indicate the direction in which opinions of this issue are moving.

To make it in a man's world, however, women believe that they have to be much better at what *they* do than *men* do. More than three-quarters of all women — 77% — feel that way strongly or at least to a certain extent, an increase of eight percentage points since 1974.

TABLE 2.11

Getting ahead in the world: must a woman be better than a man?

	1974	1985
	Women %	Women %
To get ahead in this world, a woman has to be much better at what she does than a man does.		
Feel that way strongly	43	47
To a certain extent	26	30
Don't feel that way	27	21
Not sure	4	2

Had they been men, a growing number of women — although still a minority — feel they would have gone much further in the world. In the past decade, the percentage of women who agree with this idea (either wholeheartedly or to some extent) has risen from 33% to 44%. At the same time, the proportion who reject the notion has dropped from 63% to 53%.

Despite the perceived advantages in being a man, only 12% of all women feel that they have had to sacrifice what they wanted to do in life, and only 7%, that their educations have been wasted just because of their womanhood. In these two respects, majorities of women don't think that discrimination has prevented them from leading satisfying lives.

TABLE 2.12 ***Is being a woman a barrier to self-fulfillment?***

	1974	1985
	Women %	Women %
If I had been born a man, I would have gotten a lot further in this world.		
Feel that way strongly	14	19
To a certain extent	19	25
Don't feel that way	63	53
Not sure	4	2
Being a woman has prevented me from doing some of the things I wanted to do in life.		
Feel that way strongly	11	12
To a certain extent	13	20
Don't feel that way	73	67
Not sure	3	1
My education is being wasted, since I never get to use what I learned in school in my everyday life.		
Feel that way strongly	7	7
To a certain extent	10	15
Don't feel that way	80	77
Not sure	2	1

While they may be barred from certain roles, and while men have advantages over women in the working world, women don't think less of themselves because of this. The Poll shows that nine out of 10 women believe it takes just as much drive and intelligence to raise children properly as it does to hold a good position in business or government. Even though women's 'traditional' role as mother and homemaker is changing, the homemaker's accomplishments are considered no less significant.

TABLE 2.13

Does it take as much intelligence to raise children as to hold a job?

	1974	1985
	Women %	Women %
It takes as much intelligence and drive for a woman to bring up children properly as it takes to hold a good position in business or government.		
Feel that way strongly	78	74
To a certain extent	14	18
Don't feel that way	4	6
Not sure	3	2

Whatever the distribution of their responsibilities in the future — among child-rearing, household and work responsibilities — women generally believe that their daughters' situation will be better than their own. Almost three-quarters of today's women are optimistic about their daughters' futures, up from two-thirds in 1974.

TABLE 2.14

What are women's prospects?

	1974	1985
	Women %	Women %
Things will be much better for girls growing up today than they were for girls in my time.		
Feel that way strongly	39	42
To a certain extent	28	31
Don't feel that way	26	23
Not sure	6	4

2.3

The Women's Movement and the Equal Rights Amendment

The Women's Movement and the Working Woman

2.3.1

Both women and men strongly agree that the women's movement has helped rather than hurt working women in the past 20 years. More than seven out of 10 Americans of both sexes feel this way.

But is the women's movement in tune with the needs of working women today? On that issue the consensus is weaker. Whereas 73% of all women think the movement was helpful in the past, only 59% think so today.

For men, a similar pattern holds: 71% give the women's movement high marks for previous accomplishments, but only 54% say it is still on the right track. The disparity between past and present support suggests that enthusiasm for the current policies of the women's movement may have peaked.

The women who are most inclined to think that the women's movement is in touch with the needs of working women are the 18- to 29-year-olds (65%), the college educated (63%), employed women (63%) and black women (65%).

Question:

There are working women and there are homemakers. Over the past twenty years or so, do you think the women's movement has helped working women, or made little difference to them, or hurt them?

TABLE 2.15

The women's movement: has it helped or hindered working women?

	Women say	Men say
	%	%
Over the past 20 years the women's movement has:		
Helped working women	73	71
Hurt working women	7	9
Made little difference to them	16	16
Don't know	4	4
With regard to the needs of most working women, the women's movement today is:		
In tune	59	54
Out of touch	25	28
Don't know	16	18

The Women's Movement and the Homemaker

2.3.2

The women's movement may have helped working women, but a plurality of women and men — 42% — think that it has had little positive influence on homemakers. One-third think the movement has helped homemakers; a fifth, that it has hurt them.

Employed women (36%) are more inclined than women who are not employed (28%) to think that the women's movement has helped homemakers. The reason may be that employed women themselves tend to be more involved in, and may have been more helped by, the women's movement and thus see greater benefits in it for all.

Question:

And what effect do you think the women's movement has had on homemakers—do you think it has helped homemakers, or made little difference to them, or hurt them?

TABLE 2.16

The women's movement: has it helped or hindered homemakers?

	Women say	Men say
	%	%
Over the past 20 years the women's movement has:		
Helped homemakers	33	32
Hurt homemakers	19	21
Made little difference to them	42	42
Don't know	6	5

The Future of the Equal Rights Amendment

2.3.3

Support for a constitutional amendment to insure equal rights for women is relatively strong among women, less so among men. Despite initial defeat of the E.R.A. in the state legislatures, 57% of women and 46% of men think that it should be put to a vote again. Substantial numbers (21% of women, 27% of men) think it should not.

The survey shows that support for the E.R.A. may not be very deep, which makes its passage still doubtful. Regardless of the ultimate fate of the E.R.A., however, there is no question that the debate about its merits has raised the nation's consciousness about the problems women face.

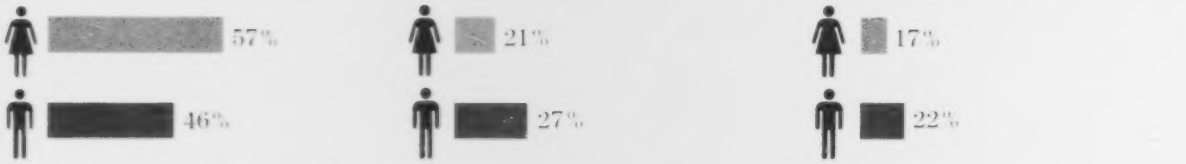
Questions:

The various State Legislatures voted against an amendment to the United States Constitution which would assure women equal rights under the law. As I'm sure you know, there is a lot of controversy for and against this amendment.

Do you think a constitutional amendment insuring equal rights for women should or should not again be put to a vote, or don't you care one way or the other?

TABLE 2.17

Opinions on the Equal Rights Amendment



3

Marriage and Divorce

Getting Married

3.1 For nine out of 10 American women, marriage is still the preferred lifestyle. The institution itself, however, is not the same as it was in the 1970s, and further change is likely, for the following reasons. First, women now tend to marry at an older age, and the attitudes they bring to marriage are much different from younger women's; second, most women — seven out of 10 — say that they could have a happy and complete life without getting married; and third, the type of marriage that most people want does not resemble the traditional marriage of the past.

Is Marriage the Best Way of Life?

3.1.1 Sixty-two percent of adult Americans are married and living with their spouses, which is five percent less than in 1980.

The prevalence of living arrangements other than marriage has increased slightly since 1980, including the number of men living with someone "as if" married. Though small — four percent — this figure has doubled over the past five years. Among women, 50% more tend to live this way in 1985 than did in 1980, although the actual increase — from two to three percent — is small. Despite the drop in the percentage of traditional marriages, more than 90% of both men and women believe that being married is better than not — little change in a decade.

TABLE 3.1

Living situations of women and men

	1980		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Married and living with spouse	66	68	62	62
Living with someone as husband and wife though not married	2	2	3	4
Living with other adult(s)	13	20	15	22
No other adult in household	18	9	19	12

The New Marriage

3.1.2 Eleven years ago, a traditional division of labor characterized marriages that were perceived then as the most desirable: 'he' was the provider, 'she' ran the house and took care of the children. In 1985, this arrangement has become the second choice for both women and men. Today, only 37% of women opt for a traditional "his and hers" marriage, a drop of 13 percentage points from the 50% who selected it in 1974. Men also put the traditional marriage in second place, with 43% selecting it today, versus 48% 11 years ago.

In 1985, the primary choice among both women and men is the shared-responsibility marriage, in which household tasks and child-rearing responsibilities are gender-blind. Fifty-seven percent of women and 50% of men see this as the more fulfilling way to live, up 11 points for women and six for men since 1974.

Younger women are most enthusiastic about the shared-responsibility marriage, but its appeal cuts across almost all age groups. Only among those born before 1935 does a majority — 52% — support the traditional marriage. In the 50-plus group, however, 42% support the shared-responsibility approach.

Question:

In today's society there are different lifestyles, and some that are acceptable today that weren't in the past. Regardless of what you may have done or plan to do with your life, and thinking just of what would give *you personally* the most satisfying and interesting life, which one of these different ways of life do you think would be the best as a way of life? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 3.2

Ranking the most satisfying lifestyles

	1974		1985					
	Total women %	Total men %	Total women %	18 to 29 %	30 to 39 %	40 to 49 %	50 and over %	Total men %
Marriage where husband and wife share responsibilities more — both work, share housekeeping and child responsibilities	46	44	57	69	65	58	42	50
Traditional marriage with husband assuming responsibility for providing for family and wife running house and taking care of children	50	48	37	24	30	34	52	43
Living with someone of opposite sex, but not marrying	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	3
Remaining single and living alone	1	1	2	1	1	4	2	3
Remaining single and living with others of the same sex	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Living in large family of people with similar interests in which some are married and some are not	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1
None/don't know	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1

Is Marriage a Prerequisite for Happiness?

3.1.3

Most people agree that being married is better than not, but they also think that a complete and happy life is possible without marriage. Among women, 72% think that *women* can be happy without being married, but only 57% think that *men* can be happy without being married. More than 60% of all men, however, think both sexes can cope effectively without marriage.

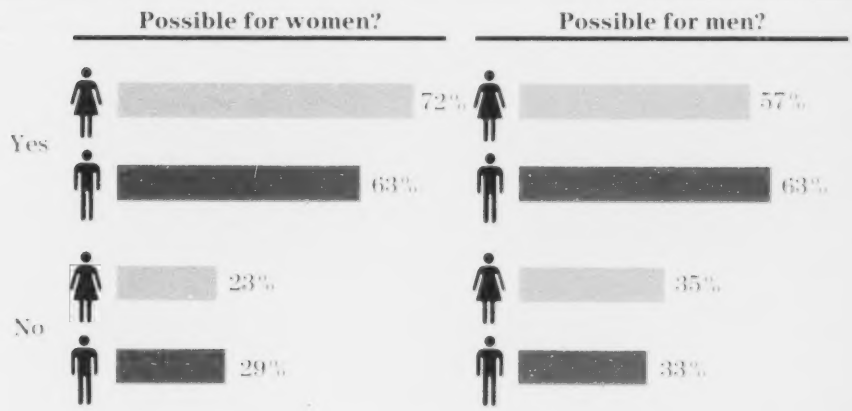
Questions:

(X half of sample)
Do you think it is possible for a woman to have a complete and happy life if she remains single?

(Y half of sample)
Do you think it is possible for a man to have a complete and happy life if he remains single?

TABLE 3.3

Can women and men be happy without being married?



Women of all ages, living situations and educational levels, both employed and not employed, think that women can be happy and fulfilled without marriage. While the level of support varies, the base line never falls below 59%.

TABLE 3.4

Can women and men be happy without marriage? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Possible	Not possible	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total women—1985	72	23	5
Single	85	10	5
Married	71	24	5
Divorced separated	74	23	3
Widowed	60	32	8
White	74	21	5
Black	61	33	7
18 to 29	74	22	4
30 to 39	77	18	4
40 to 49	80	15	5
50 and over	64	30	6
Non-high school graduate	59	35	6
High school graduate	72	23	5
College	80	16	4
Employed	77	20	4
Not employed	66	27	6

Reasons for Marrying

3.1.4

Being in love is still the primary reason people get married. Eighty-three percent of all Americans say so. More than 50% of all Americans say that liking your mate and wanting to be with him or her is the number two reason for getting married. Having children ranks third. This ranking has been constant since 1974.

Among the less important reasons to marry, there has been one significant development since the early 1970s. Fewer women and even fewer men in 1985 believe that the most important reason to marry is that married family life is better than living independently. Only 13% of single women and men, aged 18 to 29, say that the prospect of a family life, compared to living independently, is a reason to marry. (This finding is consistent with another: the majority view among both men and women that life without marriage can still be fulfilling.)

Question:

People marry for different reasons. Here is a list of some of them. Would you read down that list and call off the 2 or 3 that you consider the *most* important reasons for marrying?
(Card shown respondent)

TABLE 3.5

Reasons for marrying

	1974		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Being in love	83	77	83	83
You like and want to be with a particular person	50	44	57	53
To have children	41	35	45	42
You can share responsibilities, income, etc., and have easier, more comfortable life	23	21	25	23
Way of life in a family is better than life living on your own	24	31	19	22
So you won't be lonely	10	13	14	19
For economic security	14	7	14	8
For a satisfactory sexual relationship	13	17	12	15
Married couples have better social life	7	9	5	6
You get left out of a lot of things if not married	1	2	1	1

The Ideal Age for Marrying

3.1.5

In a poll taken in 1952, 84% of adult American women said that the ideal age for a woman to marry was 24 years or younger; today, only 52% think so, a drop of 32 percentage points. In 1952, only 11% of all women thought that 25 was an ideal age to marry, versus 30% today. Eighteen percent of all women today — four times as many as in 1952 — would delay marriage until the age of 26 or beyond.

In other words, women in 1952 voted more than six to one in favor of marrying *before* the age of 25; in 1985, 50% of all women say that women should delay marriage until *after* 25.

Men, on the other hand, continue to opt for a younger bride, but by a much reduced margin: 33 years ago, 83% believed the ideal age for a woman to marry was no older than 24 years; in 1985, only 63% think so, a drop of 20 points.

At what age should men marry? The ideal age has always been somewhat older than for women, but the change over the past 33 years has been in favor of marrying later. In 1952, 41% of women thought men should marry when they were 24 years old or younger; now, only 25% think so, a drop of 16 points. Today, three-quarters of women think that the right age for men to marry is 25 years of age or older, and preferably 26 or older. In 1952, only 22% thought men should marry at age 26 or older; in 1985, 40% think so, an increase of 18 percentage points.

Men today also lean toward older marriage ages for themselves. Thirty-six percent now, versus 45% in 1952, say the groom should be no more than 24 years old; 64% now, versus 50% then, say that marriage at 25 years or older is better for men; and 33% now, versus 20% in 1952, select 26 years and older as the proper age for men to marry.

Questions:

What do you think is the ideal age for a woman to marry?
What do you think is the ideal age for a man to marry?

TABLE 3.6

The ideal age for marriage

	Ideal age for women				Ideal for age for men			
	1952		1985		1952		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Under 20 years old	13	16	8	14	1	1	4	7
20 to 24 years old	71	67	44	49	40	44	21	29
25 years old	11	10	30	22	34	30	35	31
26 years old plus	4	3	18	16	22	20	40	33
Don't know	1	4	3	6	3	5	3	6

3.2

Being Married

The Institution of Marriage

3.2.1

Majorities of women (60%) and men (59%) believe — as they did in 1970 — that marriage is not as strong an institution as it once was. In 1970, however, 73% and 71%, respectively, felt that way. This year, three times as many women as in 1970 — 15% — think marriage is a stronger institution than it was in the past. Men, in the same proportion, concur.

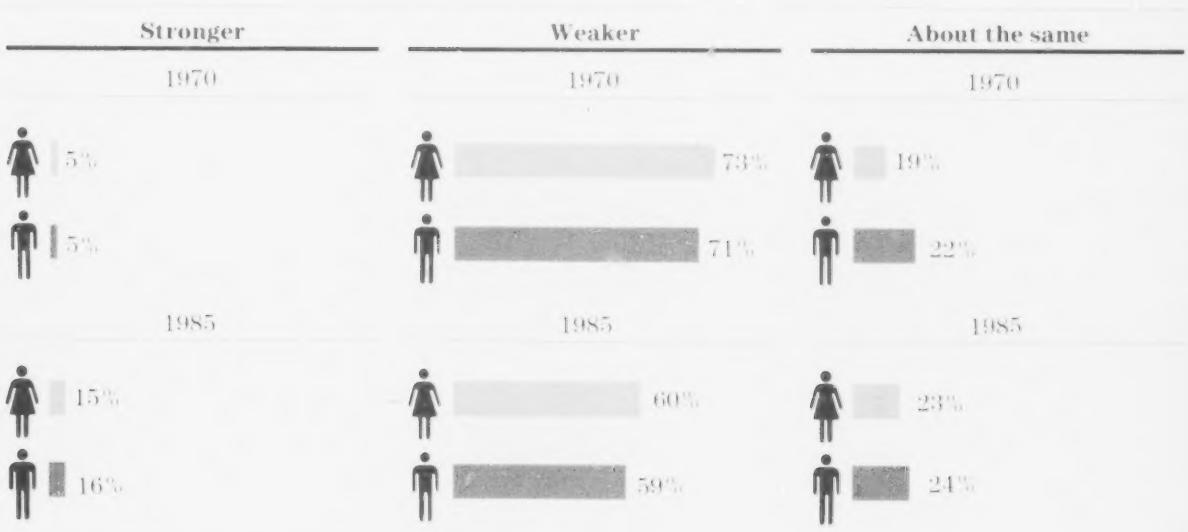
As a group, men and women in 1985 are slightly more positive about the institution of marriage than they were in 1970, when seven out of 10 thought the institution of marriage was weaker than it had been. Six out of 10 think so today.

Question:

Compared to 10 years ago, do you think the institution of marriage is stronger, weaker, or is about the same as it was then?

TABLE 3.7

The institution of marriage: is it stronger or weaker than in the past?



The groups among women who are most optimistic about marriage are women under 40, those with college experience, and the more affluent. Black women are least likely to feel positively about the current strength of marriage as an institution. Older women and divorced or separated women are also pessimistic.

TABLE 3.8

Evaluating the institution of marriage; stronger or weaker today than in the past? Breakdown by demographic groups

Compared to 10 years ago, the institution of marriage is:	Stronger	Weaker	About the same	Not sure
	%	%	%	%
Total women—1985	**15**	**60**	**23**	**3**
Single	16	54	25	5
Married	17	59	22	3
Divorced separated	9	62	26	3
Widowed	8	68	21	3
White	16	59	22	3
Black	6	66	24	3
18 to 29	18	55	22	4
30 to 39	20	53	26	2
40 to 49	15	60	22	3
50 and over	9	67	21	3
Non-high school graduate	10	67	19	4
High school graduate	13	63	22	2
College	20	51	25	3
Under $15,000	9	66	22	3
$15,000 to under $25,000	16	61	21	3
$25,000 to under $35,000	17	57	23	3
$35,000 plus	21	51	26	2
Total employed	17	56	25	3
Not employed	13	64	20	3

Who Sacrifices More Freedom?

3.2.2

In a poll taken in 1951, the majority of women — 58% — believed that when they married they gave up more freedom than men gave up. Fifty-seven percent still think so. Thirty-four years ago a plurality of men — 39% — maintained that *their* independence was more compromised in marriage; today, a plurality of men — 39% — believe that marriage involves a comparable loss of freedom for both partners.

In 1985, three times as many women and four times as many men say that marriage hinders the freedom of each partner in equal measure.

Question:

In general, when a couple marries, who would you say gives up more liberty—the man or the woman?

TABLE 3.9

In marriage, who sacrifices more freedom?

	1951		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
The man	19	39	11	29
The woman	58	33	57	28
Both equally (vol.)	9	10	30	39
Don't know	11	15	2	4

What Makes a Good Marriage?

3.2.3

Plenty of love and romance, the ability to talk freely with one another, a sense of humor and sexual fidelity: since 1974, ideas of what makes a good marriage have remained constant. Indeed, sexual fidelity today is more important than ever. Eighty-three percent of women and 77% of men say that sexual fidelity is more important than a satisfying sexual relationship, financial security or having children. Having a good sexual relationship ranked third on the list in 1974; today, it ranks seventh.

Children are a less important element in marriage for both men and women today. In 1974, about half of each sex thought that having children was very important; only 46% of all women and 45% of all men think so today.

Financial security, however, is cited by a growing number of women and men as a significant element in a good marriage. It is a key consideration for 58% of women and 53% of men today, versus 49% for both in 1974.

Question:

Now I'm going to name some different things, and for each one, I'd like to know how important you think it is to a good marriage—very important, fairly important, not too important, or not at all important? First, (each item read to respondent)

TABLE 3.10

What makes a good marriage?

	1974		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Being in love	90	86	91	89
Being able to talk about your feelings	88	83	86	82
Spouse's sexual fidelity	79	70	83	77
Being able to see humorous side of things	78	70	77	71
Keeping romance alive	71	66	75	74
Having similar ideas on how to raise children	74	64	71	65
Having a good sexual relationship	77	73	69	72
Spouse understanding what you do everyday	62	52	66	60
Having similar ideas on how to handle money	68	61	66	62
Having the same kind of life, activities, friends	68	64	63	60
Financial security	49	49	58	53
Having children	51	51	46	45
Having similar backgrounds	28	23	26	23

How Decisions Are Handled

3.2.4

Among married men and women, or those living as such, who makes decisions about major purchases, investments and vacations? Here, harmony reigns: both partners do.

Women think that they and their spouses or companions decide jointly when to buy a car (79%) and what make, model and color it should be (73%). A majority of men (76% and 73%, respectively) also think that these are joint decisions. For the rest, men tend to think that women rarely make these decisions on their own, while a few women think they do.

Eighty-one percent of women say that the decision to buy major appliances is made jointly, and 70% say the kind of appliance to buy is

a joint decision. However, 14% of women believe that they alone decide when to buy a major appliance, and 24% think the decision about make, model and color is made unilaterally by them. Again, men concur: majorities say that they reach joint decisions with their mates about when to buy an appliance (78%), and jointly about the make, model and color (72%), while 17% say their wives or companions decide when to buy a major appliance, and 23% say the women decide its make, model and color.

According to both women and men, financial decisions are joint decisions. Seventy-six percent of women and 79% of men say that decisions about how much to save and invest are jointly made; according to 76% of women and 75% of men, decisions about where to invest are also joint decisions.

Eighty-five percent of both sexes agree that decisions regarding vacations — both where to go and how much to spend — are made jointly by the man and the woman of the household.

Question:

Couples handle decisions on major expenditures and investments in different ways. Here is a list of some different kinds of decisions on expenditures and investments. Would you read down that list, and for each one tell me who primarily makes that kind of decision in your household — you, or your spouse (mate), or is it usually a joint decision? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 3.11

Who makes the decisions?

	Opinions of women who are married or living as married			Opinions of men who are married or living as married		
	I do	He does	We do	I do	She does	We do
	%	%	%	%	%	%
When to buy a car	4	17	79	22	2	76
What kind of car to buy (make, model, color, etc.)	6	20	73	23	—	73
When to buy a major household appliance (fridge, stove, TV set, etc.)	14	4	81	5	17	78
What kind of household appliance to buy (make, model, color,etc.)	24	5	70	4	23	72
How much money to save or invest	10	13	76	15	5	79
Where to put savings and investments	8	14	76	18	5	75
Where to go on vacation	6	4	89	3	5	90
How much to spend on vacation	5	9	85	8	4	86

Should Husbands Pay Wives for Housework?

3.2.5

A quiet revolution about the concept of pay for housework, with potentially important implications, appears to be fermenting. While half of all women — 50% — and even more men — 65% — oppose the idea, the percentage of women who approve it has risen sharply over the past 10 years. Today, 42% of women believe a husband should pay his wife a weekly salary; in 1974, only 24% of women thought so.

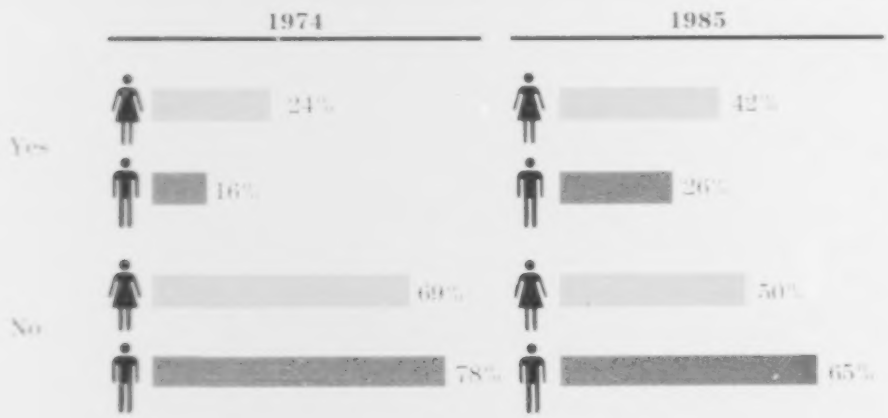
Men remain firmly opposed to the idea of paying their wives for housework. Although almost two-thirds reject the idea, the number of men who would accept such an arrangement today has increased sharply, up from 16% in 1974 to 26% today.

Question:

It has been suggested that women who are housewives ought to be paid a regular weekly salary by their husbands for the work they do in the home. Do you approve or disapprove of this?

TABLE 3.12

Should husbands pay wives for housework?



Among various groups of women, support for paying homemakers differs markedly. Absolute majorities of single women (54%), divorced or separated women (54%), and black women (62%) approve the idea. The least supportive group is older women, age 50 and over; only 34% of them think husbands should pay wives to do housework. Note, however, that even in this group, the level of support is 10 points higher than the level of support expressed by *all* women in 1974.

TABLE 3.13

Should husbands pay wives for housework? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Yes	No	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total women — 1985	42	50	8
Single	54	38	8
Married	40	53	7
Divorced separated	54	36	10
Widowed	31	59	10
White	39	53	8
Black	62	28	10
18 to 29	49	43	7
30 to 39	47	46	7
40 to 49	44	48	8
50 and over	34	58	9
Non-high school graduate	45	46	9
High school graduate	43	49	8
College	40	53	8
Employed	44	48	9
Not employed	41	52	7

About one-third of adult Americans cannot place a dollar value on the work of the average homemaker. Among those who do make an estimate, however, women and men agree on an annual average of $15,000.

Question:

Considering the kind and amount of work that homemakers do, and the number of hours spent doing that work, what annual dollar value would you place on work the typical homemaker does?

TABLE 3.14

Men and women estimate the dollar value of housework

	Women's Opinions	Men's Opinions
	%	%
Under $7,500	10	13
$7,500 to under $12,500	16	16
$12,500 to under $18,000	11	10
$18,000 to under $25,000	12	11
$25,000 plus	17	11
Don't know	34	39
Median annual income	$15,000	$15,000

Women with college experience award top dollar for a homemaker's pay. They think that $20,000 is an appropriate annual salary. Perhaps that's because these college-educated women are the least likely to find themselves employed solely as homemakers; on the other hand, they also have the greatest earnings potential, so that relative to their own pay, they are apt to be more generous. So are women aged 30 to 39 and women who are employed part-time. Both groups of women think that $18,000 per year would be fair pay. At the other end of the scale, widowed women and black women would settle for a more modest $12,000 salary.

TABLE 3.15

Estimating the dollar value of housework: breakdown by demographic groups

(Shown by median annual income in thousands of dollars)

	Women's Opinions	Men's Opinions
Total	$15.0	$15.0
Single	15.0	13.0
Married	15.0	15.0
Divorced/separated	15.0	12.0
Widowed	12.0	8.0
White	15.0	15.0
Black	12.0	8.5
18 to 29	15.0	14.0
30 to 39	18.0	15.0
40 to 49	15.0	15.0
50 and over	15.0	12.0
Non-high school graduate	10.0	10.0
High school graduate	15.0	12.0
College	20.0	15.0
Women:		
Employed (themselves or wives)	15.0	15.0
Full-time	15.0	15.0
Part-time	18.0	10.0
Women:		
Not employed (themselves or wives)	15.0	12.0

The increase in the number of women who both work *and* manage households and children has undoubtedly influenced people's thinking about the appropriateness of salaries for homemaking tasks. But should such salaries be taxed and subject to Social Security deductions and benefits? If homemakers were paid for their labors, new public policies in these and other areas would have to be addressed.

Getting Divorced

3.3 Although both men and women see divorce as a necessary solution for failed marriages, opinions vary about what constitutes a fair settlement between husband and wife. Money poses the biggest problem.

The Acceptability of Divorce

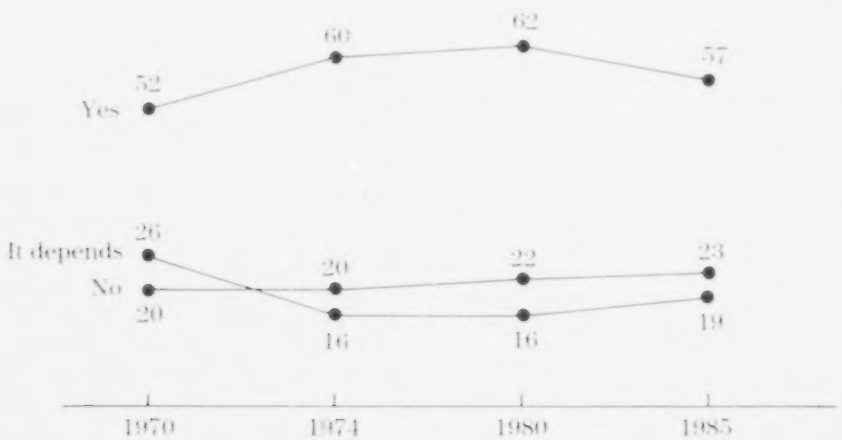
3.3.1 The belief in divorce as a solution to a marriage that isn't working rises and falls from year to year among both men and women. In the 15 years between 1970 and 1985, it has varied between 52 and 62% for women, and between 54 and 59% for men. In 1985, 57% of women and 54% of men say divorce is acceptable in the case of marriages that fail.

Question:

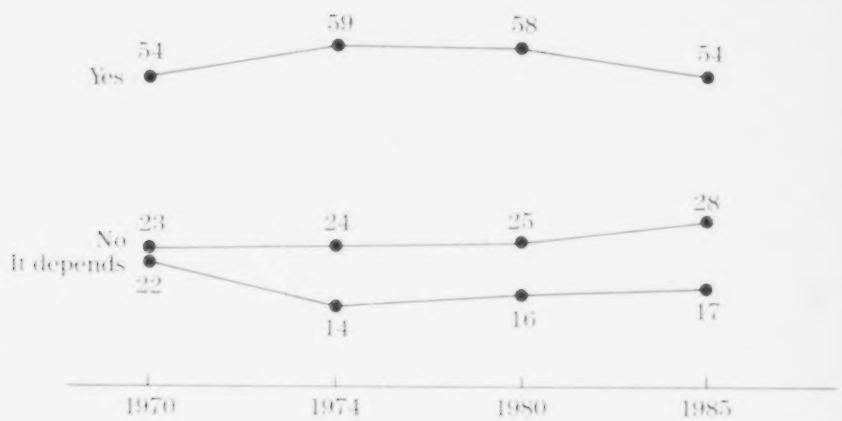
If a marriage isn't working out, do you favor or oppose divorce as a solution?

TABLE 3.16 ***Is divorce acceptable?***

Women say %



Men say %


Yes
54
59
58
54
No
23
24
25
28
It depends
22
14
16
17
1970
1974
1980
1985

Alimony

3.3.2

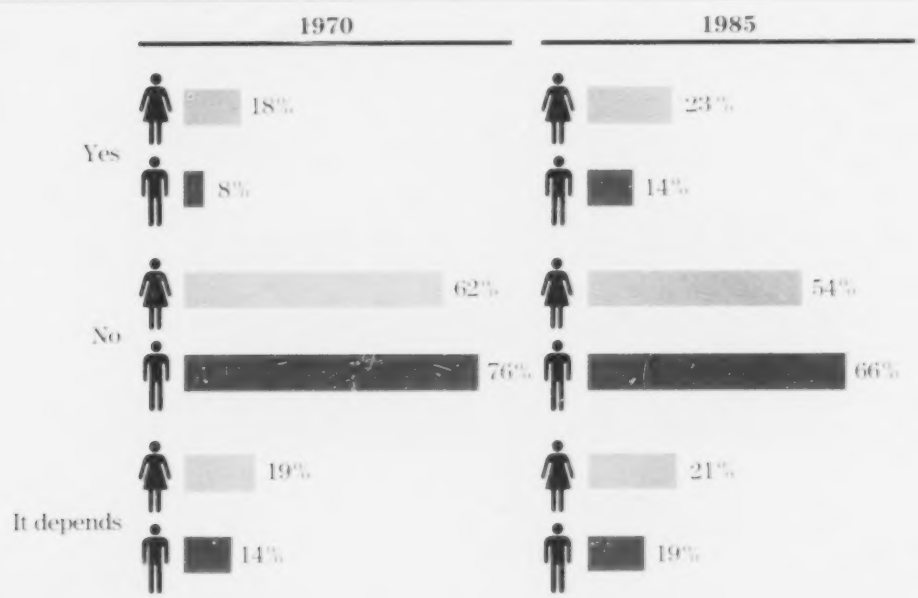
Over the same 15-year period, majorities of both men and women have said that if a divorced woman has adequate sources of income — money that allows a reasonably comfortable lifestyle — she should not receive alimony. Men are more adamant about this than women. Today, 66% of all men, versus 54% of all women, think that a divorced woman with a reasonably adequate income should *not* receive alimony. Twenty-three percent of all women believe that a divorced woman should receive alimony regardless of her other income, up five points since 1970; 14% of men, compared to eight percent then, agree.

Question:

And how do you feel about alimony—if a divorced woman has or can earn a reasonable income, do you think she should receive alimony from her ex-husband or not?

TABLE 3.17

Should a divorced woman receive alimony?



Men and women disagree as to whether a divorced woman should ever pay alimony to her former husband. A majority of men — 52% — say yes, the wife in "at least some situations" should pay, while a plurality of women — 47% — disagree. They feel there are no possible situations in which a wife should pay alimony to her ex-husband. Opinions on this have not changed very much over the past five years.

Question:

If a man and a woman are divorced, do you think there are at least some situations where the woman should be required to pay alimony to her former husband, or don't you think a woman should ever have to pay alimony?

TABLE 3.18

Should a wife pay alimony to a former husband?

	1980		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Yes	39	52	40	52
No	51	39	47	36
Don't know	10	9	13	12

Palimony

3.3.3 Majorities of men (57%) and women (65%) reject the concept of palimony, a settlement, when the relationship is over, for a woman who lived with a man as if married. The number of women who approve of palimony settlements in 1985 has increased marginally over 1980. Then, 19% of women approved of a settlement for an "as if" marriage; five years later 23% of women approve of the idea.

Question:

Suppose a woman lives with a man over a period of time without getting married, but lives with him just as though they were married. If they split up, do you think the woman has the right to an alimony-like settlement just as though she had been married to him, or don't you think she should be entitled to it because they were not married?

TABLE 3.19

Should a woman receive palimony?

	1980		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Yes	19	16	23	15
No	64	68	57	65
It depends (vol.)	14	13	17	17
Don't know	3	3	3	4

Child Custody

3.3.4 Given the opportunity, a significant number of women (28%) and men (25%) would avoid the "either or" approach to child custody and opt for joint custody arrangements. In 1974, when Virginia Slims did not include joint custody as an option, about 56% of women and men chose the least divisive option then offered: both parents, they said, should be considered for custody, with the final decision based on the circumstances. When people had an opportunity to select joint custody as an option, however, it reduced the level of support for all other options, although 41% still say that both parents should be considered and one chosen.

Question:

When a couple with children get a divorce, the question arises as to which parent should get custody. Assuming that both parents could be described as "fit parents," which one of these statements best expresses how you feel custody should be decided? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 3.20

Which parent should get custody?

	1974		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Mother and father should be equally considered for custody of any children and a decision made according to circumstances	56	55	41	41
Mother and father should get joint custody	X	X	28	25
Mother should automatically get custody of all children	24	18	17	13
If old enough, children should choose which parent they want to go with	15	19	10	17
Mother should automatically get custody of girls, father, of boys	1	4	1	1
Father should automaticaliy get custody of all children	—	—	—	1
Don't know	4	4	2	3

X Not asked

If a custodial mother can or does earn a reasonable income, should the father still pay child support? Two-thirds of both men and women think that the father should provide at least partial support; another third of women and one-quarter of men believe that the father should provide full support. These opinions have not changed since 1974.

Question:

Another question that arises in divorce is that of financial settlements. Every individual case is different, of course, but generally speaking, we'd like to know how you feel about child support and alimony. First, child support. If a mother has custody of the children, and has or can earn a reasonable income, do you think the father should be required to provide full financial support for the children, or partial support, or no support?

TABLE 3.21

Under what circumstances should a father pay child support?

	1974		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Yes: Full support	31	24	33	26
Yes: Partial support	64	67	65	69
No: No support	3	5	1	3
Don't know	3	4	2	3

4

Children

Children

4.0

Neither women nor men think that a happy marriage requires children. Moreover, those in their most productive, child-bearing years expect to bear just enough children to maintain the American population at its present level. The suggestion is that if people follow their inclinations, longevity and immigration will generate most of America's population growth for the rest of the century.

Children and Marriage

4.1

Only 15% of all women and 19% of all men think a happy marriage is impossible without children. Five years ago, feelings were about the same.

Question:

Do you think it is possible for a man and a woman to have a complete and happy marriage if they decide to have no children?

TABLE 4.1

Can a childless marriage be a happy marriage?

	1980		1985	
	Women say %	Men say %	Women say %	Men say %
Yes	82	79	80	76
No	14	17	15	19
Don't know	4	4	4	5

With only modest differences, women from all age groups and walks of life agree that a childless marriage can be happy. The feeling is weaker among older women and among those who did not graduate from high school.

TABLE 4.2

Can a childless marriage be a happy marriage? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Yes	No	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total women—1985	80	15	4
18 to 29	82	14	4
30 to 39	85	11	4
40 to 49	82	15	2
50 and over	76	18	6
Non-high school graduate	72	24	5
High school graduate	81	15	4
College	86	10	5
Under $15,000	78	17	5
$15,000 to under $25,000	80	16	4
$25,000 to under $35,000	83	13	5
$35,000 and over	83	13	4
Employed	83	12	4
Not employed	77	18	5

The Ideal Number of Children

4.2

In four decades — two generations — the desired size of the ideal family has shrunk by one-third.

In a poll taken in 1941, about seven in 10 women and men thought three or more children would make an ideal family. Only four in 10 think so in 1985.

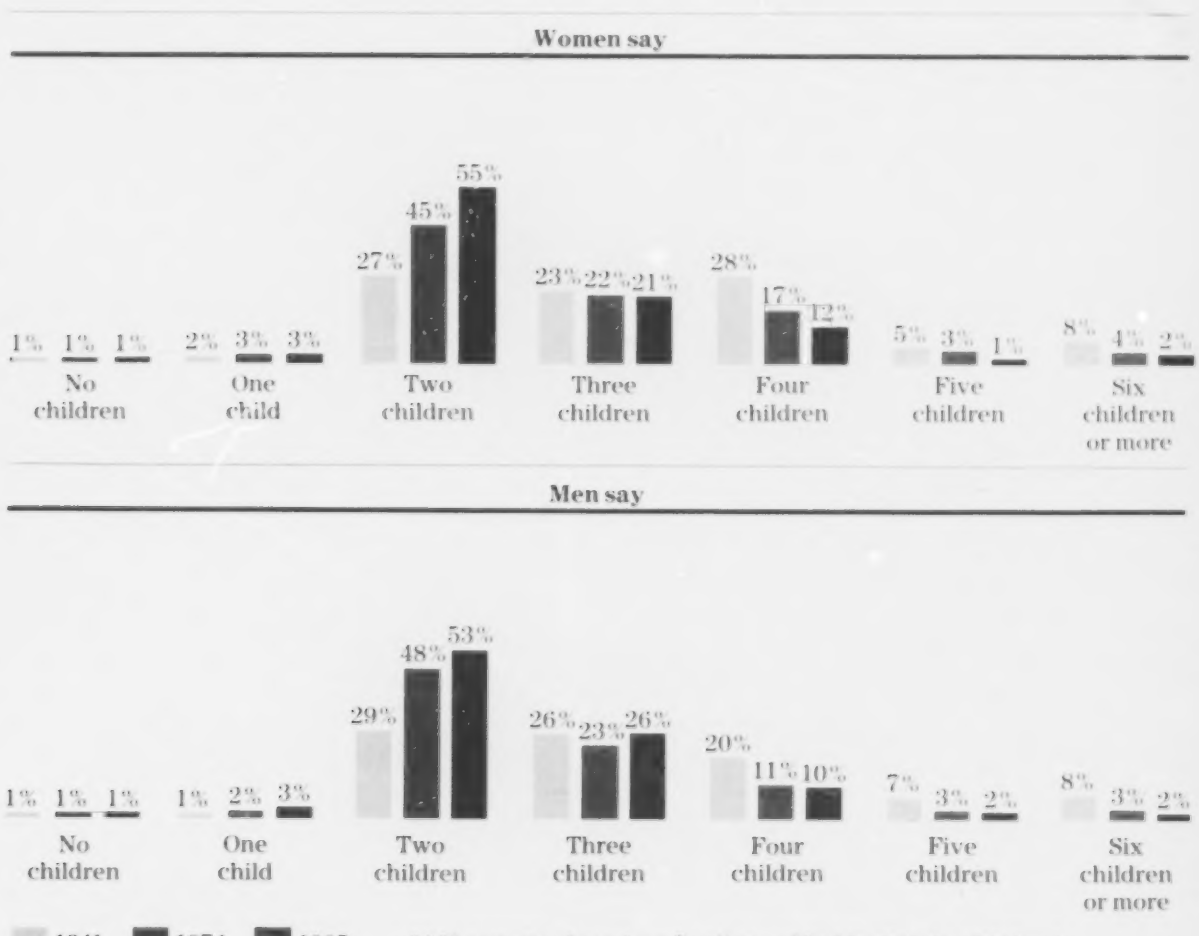
In 1941, only about three out of 10 women and men thought none, one or two children were ideal. Today, six out of 10 think so.

Question:

What do you consider is the ideal size of family—a husband and wife and how many children?

TABLE 4.3

The size of the ideal family



1941 source: American Institute of Public Opinion (Gallup)

Today, half of all women (54%) and men (50%) say that the number of children in an ideally sized family should be either two or three.

Question:

How many children do you have or plan to have?

TABLE 4.4

Summary: the number of children people have or plan to have

	1972**		1982**		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
None	14	16	17	23	16	20
One	12	9	13	12	11	11
Two	34	35	32	33	33	33
Three	20	21	18	17	21	17
Four	9	11	11	10	9	10
Five	5	4	4	3	4	4
Six	3	2	2	2	2	2
Seven	1	1	1	1	2	1
Eight	1	*	1	—	1	1
Nine	1	*	—	—	1	—
Ten or more	1	1	1	1	1	1
Mean	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.1	2.4	2.2

*Less than .5 percent

**1982, 1972 sources: ROPER REPORTS 82-8, 77-8

Younger women are much less interested in having large families than are older women. Women in prime child-bearing years plan to have *about* two children, while those who are probably past the prime child-bearing ages have, on average, *more* than two children.

Question:

How many children do you have or plan to have?

TABLE 4.5

Summary: the number of children women have or plan to have

	1985				
	Total Women	18-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over
	%	%	%	%	%
None	14	13	12	10	17
One	12	10	13	9	15
Two	34	44	40	32	24
Three	20	23	20	24	16
Four	9	7	7	14	10
Five	5	2	4	5	7
Six	3	1	2	3	5
Seven	1	*	1	1	2
Eight	1	*	*	1	1
Nine	1	*	—	*	1
Ten or more	1	*	*	*	1
Mean	2.4	2.1	2.2	2.7	2.6

*Less than .5 percent

Younger women—less eager than their mothers to have more than two children—will have just enough children to replace losses in the population, but not enough to make it grow.

5

Women and Careers

The Will to Work

Women's presence in the work force influences their relationships with their husbands and their children, their definition of the American family and the attitudes and beliefs of those already in the work force. No matter how it is measured, work outside the home has become an essential ingredient in many women's lives, much more so in the 1980s than in the 1970s. Not only are women entering the labor force in greater numbers, they also want better jobs — better than they have been offered in the past, better than they have ever aspired to.

Careers and the Married Woman

5.1.1

Work, marriage and children: nearly two-thirds (63%) of all women in 1985 identify these as the constituents of a satisfying and interesting life. A decade ago, only a bare majority — 52% — had the confidence and experience to choose employment and a family. Women who 10 years ago opted for a traditional role — marrying and bearing children but not working outside the home — are deciding now that they can have all three.

Question:

Now let me ask you a somewhat different question. Considering the possibilities for combining or not combining marriage, children and a career, and assuming you had a choice, which *one* of these possibilities do you think would offer *you* the most satisfying and interesting life? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 5.1

Preferences for marriage, children and career

	Total Women	
	1974	**1985**
	%	%
Combining marriage, career and children	52	63
Marrying, having children but not having career	38	26
Having career and marrying but not having children	4	4
Having career but not marrying or having children	2	3
Marrying but not having children or career	1	1
Don't know	3	2

Women's enthusiasm for combining a career with marriage and children is more pronounced among younger women. Seventy percent of those under 30 want a family and a career, compared to only 54% of the over-50 generation. Yet even in this older group, sentiments are much different now than in 1974, when only 44% wanted to be married and manage a family as well as a career.

TABLE 5.2

Preferences for marriage, children and career: breakdown by demographic groups

	Combining marriage, career and children	Marrying, having children but not having career	Having career and marrying but not having children	Having career but not marrying or having children	Marrying but not having children or career	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total women—1985	63	26	4	3	1	2
White	63	26	5	3	1	2
Black	63	25	3	7	1	2
18 to 29	70	19	6	3	1	2
30 to 39	66	21	6	5	1	1
40 to 49	66	22	4	5	1	2
50 and over	54	37	3	2	*	3
Non-high school graduate	53	37	3	4	1	2
High school graduate	63	28	3	3	*	3
College	70	17	7	4	1	1
Total women—1974	52	38	4	2	1	3

*Less than .5 percent

From these figures, an overall trend is clear: a growing majority of women — 63% — believe that a working marriage is not only possible but preferable. For them it holds the key to a fuller, more satisfying life, just as it always has for men.

The Hard Choice: Work or Home?

5.1.2

The modern American woman wants to work *and* have a family; but which would she choose if she could have just one? A majority of women today — 51%, compared with 35% 10 years ago — say they would rather have a job than stay at home.

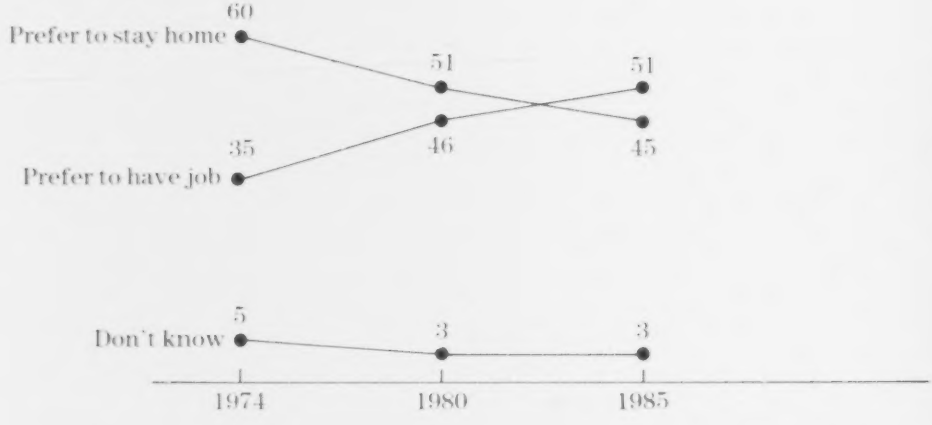
Question:

Now, if you were free to do either, would you prefer to have a job outside the home, or would you prefer to stay home and take care of a house and family?

TABLE 5.3

Preferences for a job compared to staying at home

Total Women %



The most ardent supporters of job over home are single women, and divorced or separated women: three-quarters of those who never married prefer a job; seven in 10 divorced or separated women agree. Widowed women are the exception to this rule: more than half — 53% — would prefer to stay at home.

Women who already hold a full-time job are very inclined — 69% — to choose a career instead of homemaking; but women who work only part-time are ambivalent, possibly a natural consequence of having one foot in each world. They are the only group, incidentally, in which the preference for staying at home has risen since 1980, though only by two percentage points.

Question:

Now, if you were free to do either, would you prefer to have a job outside the home, or would you prefer to stay home and take care of a house and family?

TABLE 5.4

Preference for a job compared to staying home: breakdown by demographic groups

	Prefer to have job	Prefer to stay home	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total women—1985	51	45	3
Single	75	21	4
Married	44	52	4
Divorced separated	69	30	1
Widowed	44	53	3
White	47	49	4
Black	77	21	2
18 to 29	58	38	3
30 to 39	51	46	3
40 to 49	55	41	4
50 and over	45	52	3
Non-high school graduate	47	50	2
High school graduate	50	48	3
College	56	39	5
Employed full-time	69	28	3
Employed part-time	51	44	5
Not employed	38	59	3
Total women—1974	35	60	5

Mothers and Careers

5.1.3

Should a mother with young children work if she wants to, even if the family does not need the extra income? A majority of women — 53% — say yes; a plurality of men — 48% — agree. Yet men are somewhat more disposed to stress financial need as the proper reason for mothers to work; in addition, men (11%) tend more than women (eight percent) to say that the decision to work should hinge primarily on the age of the children.

Question:

How do you feel about women working who have children under age 18—that they should have a job outside the home only if it is absolutely necessary to make ends meet financially, or that they should have a job outside the home if they choose to regardless of the age of their children?

TABLE 5.5

Should women with children work?

	Women say	Men say
	%	%
Women with children under age 18 should have job:		
If they choose to	53	48
Only if financially necessary	38	40
Depends on age of children (vol.)	8	11
Don't know	1	2

Men whose wives are currently employed and those whose wives are not differ widely on this question. A majority of the husbands of working wives — 56% — would allow the mother to choose freely, while only a third — 33% — say that the mother's decision to work should be determined by the family's need for more income.

Among men whose wives do not work, the weight of opinion shifts: 36% would permit the mother to choose freely, irrespective of other considerations, while 52% cite financial motivation. Each group appears to favor their own status quo.

On this question, regional differences of opinion are significant. Westerners — 59% of both men and women — would let the mother choose to work regardless of the family's financial need or the age of the children. In all other regions, lower percentages of both men and women would give the mother a free hand in the matter.

Who Are the Working Women?

5.1.4

For the first time in American history, a majority of adult women work part- or full-time outside the home.

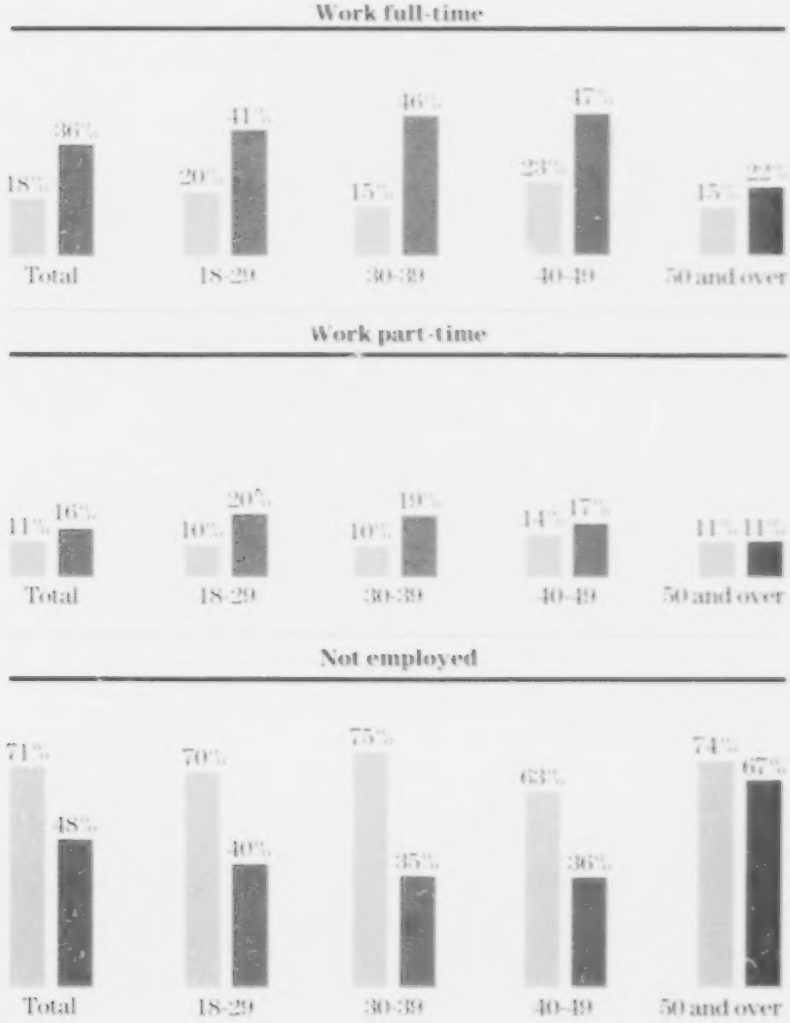
The proportion of women working full-time has doubled since 1970, from 18% then to 36% now. The increase in part-time employment has not been as rapid, but has come largely in the past few years.

Question:

Are you at present employed—either full-time or part-time?

TABLE 5.6

How many women work?



The higher the level of household income, the more likely is the household to include a woman who works full-time outside the home. In households earning $35,000 or more annually, half of the women work full-time. Less than one-quarter of the women do so in households earning $15,000 or less annually. Moving up the income scale, the propensity of women to work increases steadily.

The correlation between income and full-time employment, however, is not simply a matter of wives taking jobs to supplement their husbands' salaries to increase household wealth. Women in high-income categories are often professionals in high-paying career occupations. For instance, seven percent of women in households with annual incomes of $35,000-plus hold top jobs in their fields, compared to six percent of all men. Fourteen percent of these women have executive, administrative or other professional positions, versus nine percent of all men. Many top-income women are also entrepreneurs: five percent are owners of small retail stores or businesses, compared to only three percent of all men who are owners.

In general, women with high incomes, college educations and professional jobs are most likely to work full-time. But for all women and virtually all types of employment, the trend toward holding a job outside the home is growing and is likely to continue. One supporting proof: among women who are *not* currently employed, 37% plan to take a job in the future. Such plans are particularly prevalent among young women aged 18 to 29. Of those not already employed, 82% plan to work in the future, whereas only eight percent of unemployed women in the 50-plus age bracket see jobs in their futures.

The number of women currently employed plus those who plan to be employed totals more than two-thirds of the adult female population.

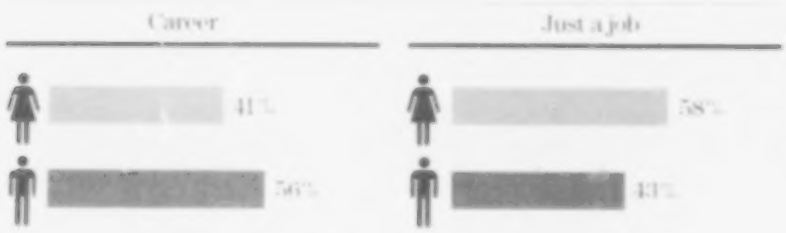
The Pleasure of Work

5.2 More women are working outside the home, but do they like what they're doing? And how does women's satisfaction with their jobs compare with men's?

Is It a Career or Just a Job?

5.2.1 A majority of employed women — 58% — think of their work outside the home as "just a job"; on the other hand, a majority of men — 56% — think of their work as a career.

TABLE 5.7 ***Women's work: a career or "just a job"?***



What accounts for these differences? A few points are worth noting. First, the sentiments of college-educated women and men are virtually the same. Of those with comparable academic credentials, 61% of the women and 66% of the men think of their work in terms of a career. The implication is that the more schooling women get, the stronger their conviction that their work is a career and not just a job.

Second, women employed part-time tend to think of their work as a career more than male part-timers do — 27% versus 15%. A tentative hypothesis: women who work part-time have other obligations, especially in the family, that prevent them from taking full-time jobs now but that do not prevent them from anticipating professional advancement when they have fewer obligations.

Question:

Do you consider the work you do to be a career or just a job?

TABLE 5.8

Women's work: a career or "just a job"?
Breakdown by demographic groups

	Career	Just a job	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total employed women	41	58	1
18 to 29	39	60	1
30 to 39	45	55	1
40 to 49	41	57	1
50 and over	38	60	1
White	43	56	1
Black	30	69	1
Non-high school graduate	17	82	*
High school graduate	30	69	1
College	61	38	*
Under $15,000 household income	22	77	1
$15,000 to $25,000	37	62	*
$25,000 to $35,000	49	50	1
$35,000 and over	55	44	*
Employed full-time	47	52	*
Employed part-time	27	71	2
Total employed men	56	43	1

*Less than .5 percent.

Money Is Not the Only Object

5.2.2

Would you work if you did not have to? Sixty-six percent of both men and women say they would, while 30% say they would not. These sentiments are consistent among virtually all employed people, male and female, and in virtually every demographic group.

TABLE 5.9

Would you continue working if financially secure?

	Employed women say	Employed men say
	%	%
Continue to work if financially secure		
Yes	66	66
No	30	30
Don't know	4	3

At the very least, these findings suggest that while women are less inclined to call work a career, they see benefits in work beyond the financial. The fact that just as many women as men would work even if they were financially secure shows that, from a woman's point of view, the meaning of "career" may need reexamination. A job to a woman, even if it's "just a job," means much more than the financial rewards.

Question:

If you were financially secure, and did not need the income from your job, do you think you would continue to work or not?

TABLE 5.10

Would you continue working if financially secure? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Continue to work if financially secure		
	Yes	No	Don't know
	%	%	%
Total employed women	66	30	4
18 to 29	67	29	4
30 to 39	67	29	4
40 to 49	66	29	4
50 and over	64	31	5
White	67	29	3
Black	60	30	10
Non-high school graduate	54	40	7
High school graduate	63	34	3
College	74	22	4
Under $15,000 household income	56	38	6
$15,000 to $25,000	64	32	4
$25,000 to $35,000	72	26	2
$35,000 and over	73	22	5
Employed full-time	67	29	4
Employed part-time	64	32	4
Total employed men	66	30	3

Personal Satisfaction on the Job

5.2.3

Whether holding a job or pursuing a career, women are more satisfied with their current employment than men. Employed women are about six times as likely to say that they derive "great" or "moderate" personal satisfaction from their work, on the one hand, than they are to say that they get "very little" or "no" personal satisfaction, on the other. Among employed men, the ratio is five to one in favor of "great" or "moderate" satisfaction. Moreover, a larger proportion of women (38%) than men (32%) say they get "great" satisfaction from their work.

TABLE 5.11

What do you get from working, aside from money?

	Employed women say	Employed men say
	%	%
Great personal satisfaction	38	32
Moderate personal satisfaction	47	51
Very little personal satisfaction	11	13
No personal satisfaction at all	3	3
Don't know	1	1

The women workers who report the greatest personal satisfaction tend to be better educated and members of households with higher incomes. Fifty percent of the women with college education and 48% of those who report household incomes greater than $35,000 say they get "great personal satisfaction" from their work. The same is not true, however, for men with similar backgrounds: only 36% of the college-educated men and 38% of the highest income earners express positive feelings about their work.

The least content of women workers are black and those earning less than $15,000 annually, although even here those who derive little satisfaction from their jobs are in the minority. Twenty-four percent of employed black females, and an equal number of women from households earning less than $15,000 annually, say that their jobs provide them with very little or no satisfaction at all.

Question:

Quite aside from the money it pays you, does your job provide you with great personal satisfaction, or moderate personal satisfaction, or very little personal satisfaction, or no personal satisfaction at all?

TABLE 5.12

What do you get from working, aside from money? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Great satisfaction	Moderate satisfaction	Very little satisfaction	No satisfaction	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
Total employed women	38	47	11	3	1
18 to 29	29	50	15	5	1
30 to 39	40	46	12	2	—
40 to 49	43	47	9	1	1
50 and over	45	46	6	3	1
White	40	47	10	3	1
Black	26	50	18	6	*
Non-high school graduate	25	52	17	5	*
High school graduate	31	52	12	4	1
College	50	40	8	2	*
Under $15,000 household income	29	47	18	6	*
$15,000 to $25,000	32	51	13	4	—
$25,000 to $35,000	43	49	6	2	1
$35,000 and over	48	41	8	2	1
Employed full-time	39	47	11	2	*
Employed part-time	36	47	11	5	1
Total employed men	32	51	13	3	1

*Less than .5 percent

Competing in the Workplace

5.3 Despite the increasing perception of sexual discrimination as a major social problem, individual working women are optimistic about their own chances to compete in their jobs equally with men.

The Equal-Opportunity Workplace

5.3.1 Majorities of working women say that they stand an equal chance to compete with the men they work with regarding salary (57%), responsibility (73%) and promotion (53%).

Women who work are becoming increasingly optimistic about equality in their own jobs. That sentiment has grown over the past five years. For various types of professional opportunities, more women today than in 1980 say they have chances equal to men. Men don't agree. They are now more inclined than in 1980 to think that working women do not enjoy equal opportunities in the workplace.

In only one area do women see inherent barriers — women becoming executives. A plurality of working women — 45% — still think that men have more likely than they to be promoted to top management positions.

Question:

Do you feel you stand an equal chance with the men you work with in the following areas?

TABLE 5.13 ***Are women's chances on the job equal to men's?***

1985

	Working women say			Men say about working women		
	Equal	Not equal	Don't know	Equal	Not equal	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Salary	57	33	10	48	46	6
Responsibility	73	18	9	61	33	6
Promotion	53	35	12	45	49	7
Becoming an executive	38	45	17	37	54	9

1980

	Working women say	Men say about working women
	Equal chance	Equal chance
	%	%
Salary	55	54
Responsibility	68	62
Promotion	52	49
Becoming an executive	34	42

What explains this contradiction, that the victims of discrimination believe that things are getting better, while the supposed perpetrators think things are getting worse? It appears that men are simply becoming more aware of a problem that has always been there but that they have not paid much attention to in the past. Working women, on the other hand, feel that the level of discrimination during the same period of time has abated for the same reason: because more attention is being paid to it.

The Woman as Boss

5.3.2

More than six out of 10 working women and working men say that the sex of their boss makes no difference to them. Women and men with highest educations are most likely to say that their boss's gender is unimportant.

Since 1980, however, this sentiment has changed. Working men today are somewhat more prone to prefer a male boss — 32% now, 26% then. Working women in 1985 are slightly more likely to prefer working for another woman — eight percent — than they were in 1980 — five percent. Men aged 40 and over are most likely to prefer a man as a boss; women aged 40 and younger are happiest working for a female.

Only eight percent of men report directly to a woman boss, while nearly half of working women (46%) report to another woman. One reason is that more men than women work and that they have been working longer than most women have, so there are more male than female bosses.

Attitudes Toward Colleagues

5.3.3

Majorities of both working women and men say their colleagues of either sex are generally supportive and helpful. Working women are most positive about fellow female employees (73%), but they are also the most critical: 11% say that their female co-workers are not supportive and helpful. While working men are somewhat less generous toward their female colleagues, so too are they somewhat less critical.

The opinions of the two sexes are virtually identical on the merits of working with men, although both sexes are slightly more positive about working with their own sex than with the opposite sex.

The college-educated are the least affected by gender and the most positive about their employment conditions. About three-quarters of women and men in this group think that their colleagues, female or male, support and help them on the job.

Questions:

Have you found most of the women you have worked with to be supportive and helpful to you in your job, or not generally supportive and helpful?
Have you found most of the men you have worked with to be supportive and helpful to you in your job, or not generally supportive and helpful?

TABLE 5.14

Feelings about on-the-job support

	Employed women say	Employed men say
	%	%
Found most women worked with:		
Supportive and helpful	73	65
Not supportive and helpful	11	7
It has varied (vol.)	14	16
Don't know	2	11
Found most men worked with:		
Supportive and helpful	69	71
Not supportive and helpful	9	9
It has varied (vol.)	18	17
Don't know	5	3

6

Combining Career and Family

Harmony in the Household

6.1 From bread-baker to bread-winner: the role of the working woman within the family has changed forever. That said, the change does not appear to threaten the structure of the family or marital relations between husbands and wives. Instead, family structure and marital relations will evolve to accommodate shared responsibilities — professional *and* household — and greater equality.

Neither women nor men believe that having a family should deter women from pursuing a career. More and more, the working marriage is becoming the typical marriage. But to what extent does a woman's work create tensions between husband and wife? Do the children of working marriages feel slighted? Regardless of any adjustments they have to make, large majorities of both men and women express confidence in the beneficial results of rising female employment.

Are Husbands Supportive of Working Wives?

6.1.1 Among men whose wives or mates work, nine out of 10 approve. Among working women who are either married or living with a mate, nine out of 10 say the man approves of her working. Regardless of age group, region or income level, these percentages hold.

Do Men Feel Threatened If Wives Earn More?

6.1.2 A growing number of married, employed men — 74% — say they would feel comfortable if their wives earned more money than they did, an increase of 11 percentage points since the question was first asked in 1980.

Working women, however, are somewhat more reticent than their mates about the idea of earning more: 68%, compared to 74% of working, married men, are comfortable with earning more than their mates. Most uneasy are women who have not completed high school: nine percent, or three times the norm, would be "not at all comfortable." Seventy-three percent of college-educated women would feel "perfectly comfortable." In general, most women and men are comfortable with a woman earning more than a man.

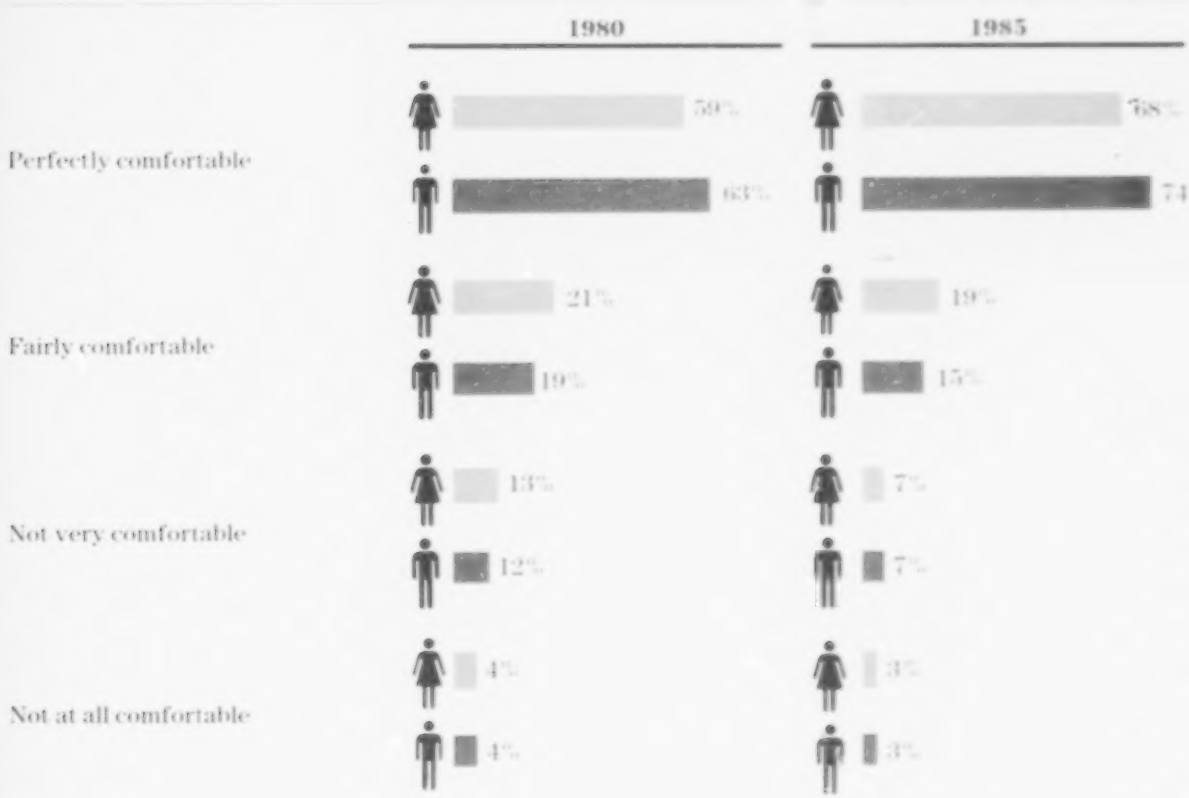
Questions:

(Women) Suppose you were to earn more at your job than your husband or mate. Would you feel perfectly comfortable about this, fairly comfortable about it, not very comfortable, or not at all comfortable about it?

(Men) Suppose your wife or mate were to earn more at her job than you do, would you feel perfectly comfortable about this, fairly comfortable about it, not very comfortable, or not at all comfortable about it?

TABLE 6.1

What if a woman earns more than her husband?



Is There Less Time for the Children?

6.1.3

A wife and mother who assumes professional responsibilities must make compromises. According to both men and women, those who tend to lose out the most are the children.

By virtually the same margin, women (43%) and men (46%) say that children get slighted the most when a woman works. When broken down by demographic groups, absolute majorities of homemakers (51%), the over-50s generation (51%), and blacks and non-high school graduates (52% each) agree. Employed women are less inclined (37%) than unemployed women (49%) to think that children get slighted.

The feeling that children get slighted correlates closely with certain age, education and income groups. Young, college-educated, more affluent women are the *least* likely to say that children get less time because of the mother's work obligations. Furthermore, these women are generally the *most* inclined to believe that in their array of responsibilities, neither marriage nor children gets slighted. Among women who are older, earn less than $15,000 annually or have less education, the opposite is true.

In her three-part role as worker, wife and mother, which role gets slighted most? Practically no one thinks that women in these situations neglect their outside job. It is life at home — as wife and mother — that gets less attention.

Question:

In today's family where the woman is both a working woman, a wife and a mother, which of the three do you think gets slighted the most—the job, the marriage, or the children, or don't you think any of them get slighted?

TABLE 6.2

What gets slighted when women work?
Breakdown by demographic groups

	Job	Marriage	Children	None get slighted	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
Total women	4	26	43	21	6
18 to 29	7	28	35	21	6
30 to 39	5	32	37	20	6
40 to 49	3	26	44	23	5
50 and over	3	20	51	20	7
White	4	27	42	21	6
Black	3	19	52	20	7
Non-high school graduate	4	20	52	19	6
High school graduate	4	25	45	21	5
College	5	30	33	24	8
Employed	5	29	37	23	7
Not employed	4	25	49	17	6
Have children	4	26	44	21	5
Do not have children	5	26	38	23	9
Total men	5	24	46	19	7

Are Children Worse Off When Mother Works?

6.1.4

Although children and their working mothers may spend less time together, their parents do not think the children suffer for it. More than 80% of working women with young children and fathers with working wives (83%) say that their children are "just as well off" as if the mother did not work.

Of course, that response could be a pleasant rationalization for the unpleasant reality. Few mothers or fathers would want to admit sacrificing their children's interests to their jobs, regardless of the reason the woman sought employment. Because they may feel they have little choice, couples with young children may be putting the best face on the situation when they say the children are "just as well off."

But the quality of relationships between adults as well as between adults and children cannot be measured by toting up the hours spent together. Because of their work outside the home, women may spend less time with their children, but they also say that they give as much to their children as non-working mothers because of the *way* they spend time with the children. Furthermore, they reject the idea that they would be better mothers if they did not work. A job for them is essential to a fuller, more satisfying life, and they believe that leading such a life makes their relations with their children much richer.

They feel similarly about their relationships with their husbands. A majority of working women — 58% — reject the notion that they would be better wives if they did not work. Of those who are married, 82% are especially critical of that idea. They believe that the satisfaction they get in work outside the home makes them better wives and mothers when they *are* home.

Question:

Here are some statements working women have made about the way they feel about working.

TABLE 6.3

How do women feel about working?

	Statement is:			
	True	Not true	Doesn't apply*	Don't know
	%	%	%	%
We would have a hard time economically if I didn't work	57	29	13	2
I feel I would be a better wife if I didn't work	10	58	29	2
I feel I would be a better mother if I didn't work	15	49	34	2
I feel I am a more interesting person to my husband or mate because I work	49	18	29	4
I may spend less time with my children because I work, but I feel I give them as much as non-working mothers because of the way I spend my time with them	41	15	40	3
When I'm home I try to make up to my family for being away at work, and as a result I rarely have any time for myself	33	36	29	2

*Response volunteered

What Gets Slighted When Women Work?

6.1.5

When asked which activities might get slighted in deference to others, all married women, working or not, mention time spent with spouse or children *last*.

If a woman did not have enough hours in the day for all her activities, she would be least likely to compromise the time she spends with her spouse or children and most likely to sacrifice the time she has set aside for herself, or for community or club activities. Women with children under age 18 are especially likely to give up their personal time to fill other responsibilities.

After personal activities, women would give up entertaining friends and going out for fun. Again, women with young children tend more than others to say that these types of social activities get slighted.

Two broader patterns emerge from the data. First, employed or not, women with young children are more likely to sacrifice everything else before they sacrifice the time they spend with their children. (The major exception to this rule is household chores, for which employment status is the controlling factor.)

Second, women who hold a job *and* have young children appear to be more harried than women with young children who do not work outside the home. They feel they have less time for everything.

TABLE 6.4

What do women give up when they work?*

	Women married and employed		Women married and not employed	
	Total	With children under 18 years	Total	With children under 18 years
	%	%	%	%
Time for:				
Community and club activities	53	58	39	52
Yourself to spend as you'd like	52	62	39	55
Entertaining friends	44	54	34	47
Going out for fun	41	52	36	50
Household chores	41	46	17	21
Sleeping	25	34	18	28
Spouse	20	27	14	23
Children	13	16	6	6

*The sample base for each activity excludes respondents who said that it did not apply to them.

Household Priorities: Finances and Chores

6.2 Despite women's strong interest in work outside the home and the strong support they get from their husbands, serious inequalities persist in the household. The husband's job continues to get top priority, and even when she holds an outside job, the woman is still responsible for most of the household chores.

Career Conflicts: Who Moves, Who Stays?

6.2.1 Given the choice between a job and staying home, a majority of American women would take a job. But what happens when the choice is between a wife's job and the husband's? If the husband is offered a very good job in another city, large majorities of both women (72%) and men (62%) say that the wife should quit, relocate with the husband and seek a new position in the new city. The percentages are slightly lower than in 1980. The reason for the drop is the increases in the percentages of both men and women who "don't know" what they would do in such a situation.

Question:

Suppose both husband and wife work and the husband is offered a very good job in another city. Assuming no children, which one of these solutions do you think they should seriously consider? (Card shown respondent.)

TABLE 6.5 ***Should a woman quit her job if her husband is relocated?***

	1980		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Husband should turn down job and stay where they are so wife can continue with her job	10	18	10	19
Wife should quit her job, relocate with husband, and try to get another job in new place	77	68	72	62
Husband should take new job and move, wife should keep her job and stay where she is, and they should get together whenever they can	4	4	6	5
Don't know no answer	9	11	13	13

Single women and men are the only groups that dissent from the majority view. Only 53% of single men and 54% of single women think that the woman should quit her job. And both groups are more inclined to say that the husband should reject the job (15% of single women, 18% of single men), or take the job while the wife keeps hers (14% and 18%, respectively).

What happens when it is the wife who is offered a good job elsewhere? While majorities of both women (55%) and men (58%) say that she should turn it down, the proportion of women who think so has fallen dramatically in the past five years, down 13 points from 68% in 1980.

¿uestion:

Suppose both husband and wife work and the husband is offered a very good job in another city. Assuming no children, which one of these solutions do you think they should seriously consider? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 6.6

Should a man quit his job if his wife is relocated?

	1980		1985	
	Women %	Men %	Women %	Men %
Wife should turn down job and stay where they are so husband can continue with his job	68	62	55	58
Husband should quit his job, relocate with wife, and try to get another job in new place	17	18	20	22
Wife should take new job and move, husband should keep his job and stay where he is, and they should get together whenever they can	4	5	8	6
Don't know/no answer	11	15	17	14

Among single women, only 35% say the wife should pass up the opportunity, while just as many — 34% — think that the husband should quit his job and relocate. Moreover, a high percentage of single women (15%) favor an untraditional living arrangement in which the wife moves and the husband stays put.

Nonetheless, the overall response to this question is proof of a double standard: men's jobs take precedence over women's and women still bow to their husband's career decisions. More than anything else, practical considerations may be at work here: men's

wages and salaries are generally higher than women's, and when forced to choose, the decision about moving is likely to favor the stronger wage earner. Remember, too, that a majority of women—58%—still consider their work as "just a job," while a majority of men think of their work as a career.

Finances in a Two-Income Home

6.2.2

Most married couples pool their incomes to meet household and personal expenses and to save. Comparatively few (14%) share only part of their incomes while allowing one spouse to keep part or all of their earnings for themselves. In the Northeast and the West, the propensity to combine salaries is somewhat higher — 83% — than in other regions.

Question:

People in two-income families have different ways of handling their incomes and expenses. Which of these ways comes closest to describing how you and your spouse (mate) handle your incomes and expenses? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 6.7

How is money handled in two-income households?

	Employed married women say	Married men with employed wives say
	%	%
Both salaries are combined and used for all household expenses, personal expenses and savings	79	79
Each one contributes something out of their salaries for household and living expenses and savings, and keeps the rest for themselves	10	15
We live on the income of one of us, and the income of the other goes into savings (beyond expenses needed because of working)	6	4
We live on the income of one of us, and the income of the other is used for that person's own purposes	4	1
None of those (vol.)	—	1
Don't know	1	—

Doing the Chores

6.2.3

In 15% of American households, domestic tasks are evenly divided between the woman and the man. Housework remains the preserve of the woman, with most men helping out only to a degree. Forty-one percent of women say that they do nearly all of the household chores and 41% say that their husbands help out to some extent.

A plurality of the men (41%) admit that the wife does a lot and that they do a little; many say that the wife does nearly everything (32%); but more men (23%) than women (15%) maintain that both spouses pitch in equally to keep the household running. Only three percent, however, claim that they, the husbands, do more of the chores.

When the wife is employed full-time, an equal split of household work is more likely. About one-quarter of women who work full-time, and a slightly higher proportion of men whose wives work full-time, say that the tasks are evenly divided. The reverse is true in cases where the wife does not work: greater than average numbers of women (47%) and men (41%) say that the wife does nearly all of the chores.

Better-educated women seem more adept at getting their mates to lend a hand. Among those with more education, the likelihood is less that the woman does nearly all of the chores, and greater that the housework is evenly divided. Also, men with more education are more willing to help out. Of college-educated men, 26% say they split chores equally with their wives, compared to only 18% of non-high school graduates. But note that those with more education are more likely to hold full-time jobs: with both husband and wife working full-time, the division of household work is probably more likely to be equal.

Questions:

(Women) How are daily household tasks handled in your house—things like preparing meals, cleaning, grocery shopping, washing dishes, etc.? Would you say you do nearly all of it, or that you do a lot of it but your husband (mate) helps some, or that it's pretty evenly divided up between the two of you, or that your husband (mate) does more of it than you do?

(Men) How are daily household tasks handled in your house—things like preparing meals, cleaning, grocery shopping, washing dishes, etc.? Would you say your wife (mate) does nearly all of it, or that she does a lot of it but you help some, or that it's pretty evenly divided up between the two of you, or that you do more of it than your wife (mate) does?

TABLE 6.8

Who does the household chores?
Breakdown by demographic groups

	Wife does nearly all	Wife does a lot, husband helps some	Evenly divided	Husband does more	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%
Total women—married, living as married	41	41	15	2	1
18 to 29	36	45	16	2	*
30 to 39	41	43	14	1	1
40 to 49	47	36	15	2	*
50 and over	42	38	16	3	*
White	41	41	16	2	1
Black	43	39	14	2	1
Non-high school graduate	47	35	13	3	1
High school graduate	42	41	14	1	1
College	36	43	19	2	*
Employed full time	30	44	24	3	*
Employed part time	45	42	12	1	1
Not employed	47	39	11	2	1
Total men—married or living as married	32	41	23	3	1
Wives employed	24	42	28	5	1
Wives not employed	41	40	17	2	*

*Less than .5 percent

A New Role for Men?

6.2.4

Although men's current household responsibilities are minimal, the psychological stage seems to be set for possible changes. Fifteen years ago, large majorities of women (68%) and men (58%) said that they would respect a man less if he took on a purely domestic role. Today, only a quarter of the population thinks so, a drop of 41 percentage points among women and 35 points among men.

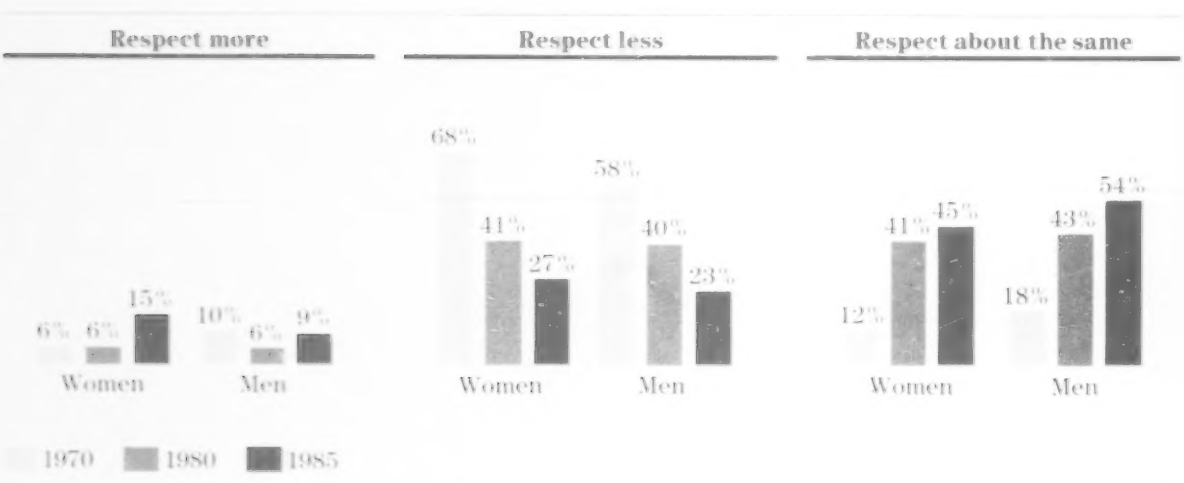
On this issue, public opinion has shifted dramatically. At the same time, the number of people who say their opinions of a man would *not* change if he stayed at home has risen dramatically since 1970, up 33 points among women and 36 points among men. Moreover, more than one woman in seven — about 14% — now say they would respect a man *more* if he took care of the children while his wife worked.

Question:

Would you respect a man more, less, or about the same if he decided to stay at home and take care of the children while his wife worked?

TABLE 6.9

Does a husband who stays home lose respect?



Opinions on this question correlate with several demographic groupings. For example, 21% of women aged 18 to 29 would respect a man more, compared with only 10% of women 40 and over. Forty-eight percent of the younger women, compared to 43% of the older women, would respect the man about the same.

Fifty percent of college-educated women, versus 35% of non-high school graduates, would respect the man equally; 17% of the former group, versus 12% of the latter, would respect him more.

Finally, 53% of those women living in households with annual incomes of $35,000 or more would respect the man equally, versus 40% of those with incomes less than $15,000. Men's opinions follow a similar pattern.[4]

7

Day-Care for Children

Bringing Up Baby

7.1 When both mother and father work, the most difficult problem they face is caring for the children, especially the very young. Although a fast-growing number of them favor more day-care centers, most parents are "very satisfied" with their present arrangements for child-care.

Which Women Have Children?

7.1.1 Nearly one-quarter (23%) of all women polled have children five years and younger; a fifth (21%) have children in the six- to 12-year-old age bracket. Among men the proportions are lower because the total male population has more single men (24%) than the total female population has single women (14%).

Married women are much more likely than unmarried women to have younger children, but about one out of seven women who describe themselves as single have children aged five and younger.

Among women who are either married or living as married, those with jobs outside the home are less likely than unemployed women to have very young children. More mothers of older children tend to be employed than mothers of younger children. There are two major reasons: mothers frequently leave their jobs to attend to their newborn children, either permanently or for various periods of maternity leave; and once their children reach a certain age, many mothers find time to work outside the home, either rejoining a previous job or starting a new one.

TABLE 7.1

Which women have children?
Breakdown by demographic groups

	Have children		
	5 and younger	6 to 12	13 to 17
	%	%	%
Total women	23	21	15
Employed (total)	20	22	18
Employed full-time	17	20	18
Employed part-time	25	27	18
Not employed	26	20	11
Married/living as married and:			
Employed	25	28	21
Not employed	34	25	14
Not married/living as married and:			
Employed	10	10	13
Not employed	9	8	6
Single	14	6	3
Married	30	27	18
Separated divorced	20	25	25
Widowed	*	2	4
Total men	18	19	15
Wives employed	23	29	26
Wives not employed	25	20	13

*Less than .5 percent

Who Cares for Them?

7.1.2 Working parents arrange care during working hours for their young children in these primary ways: "family care," with an extended family that includes grandparents, adult relatives, friends and neighbors; paid care in day-care centers and nursery schools, or with housekeepers and baby-sitters; and parental care, with parents adjusting their schedules so that one can take care of the children while the other is working.

Among working mothers with young children, the most frequently used method of day-care is family care. Twenty-nine percent of these mothers enlist the aid of grandparents or adult relatives; eight percent rely on neighbors and friends; and four percent assign older brothers and sisters to take care of their younger siblings.

Paid care ranks next in favor, with 15% opting for day-care centers, 13% for housekeepers and baby-sitters, and eight percent for nursery schools.

Finally, nearly 30% of working mothers report that they do not need extra help because they and their spouses work different hours (20%), or one of them works at home (eight percent).

When asked about additional options for day-care other than the one they use most often, most working mothers cite some form of family care as a possibility. A further 10% say they could put their children in a day-care center, while six percent mention nursery schools. But almost one-quarter of the mothers report that they have no choice other than their current method.

Most working mothers of older children aged six to 12 report that the children are supervised by relatives, friends, neighbors or the parents themselves. Twelve percent of these mothers say that their children mind themselves until a parent returns home from work.

Questions:

Which of these arrangements do you have for the care of your children age 5 or younger during your working hours?

Which of these arrangements do you have for the care of your children age 6 to 12 during your working hours?

(Card shown respondent)

TABLE 7.2

Who cares for the children when mother works?

	Day-care arrangements for children	
	Age 5 or younger	Age 6 to 12
	%	%
Employed women with children		
Grandparents, other adult relatives care for them	29	21
Spouse and I work different hours, one of us cares for them	20	22
Day-care center	15	4
Housekeeper, baby-sitter cares for them	13	9
Neighbors, friends care for them	8	11
Spouse or I work at home and can care for them	8	8
Nursery school	8	1
Older brothers, sisters care for them	4	11
Spouse doesn't work and can care for them	1	2
They take care of themselves until I or another adult gets home	—	12
None	3	9
Don't know no answer	2	3

Are Parents Satisfied with Child-Care Arrangements?

7.1.3

Yes, say large majorities of both employed mothers and husbands of employed mothers. More than three-quarters of both groups are very satisfied with their present arrangements for child care. Only small minorities (three percent of women, two percent of men) complain that they are not too satisfied or not at all satisfied.

Question:

How satisfied are you with the arrangements you have for the care of your children during your working hours—very satisfied, fairly well satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

TABLE 7.3

Are parents satisfied with child-care arrangements?

	Have children 12 or younger	
	Employed women	Men whose wives are employed
	%	%
Satisfaction with arrangements for care of children during your (your wife's) working hours		
Very satisfied	78	76
Fairly well satisfied	17	21
Not too satisfied	2	2
Not at all satisfied	1	—
Don't know	2	1

The Future of Day-Care Centers

7.2 Traditionally, the rearing of the young was an exclusive and virtually sacred function of the family and especially of mothers. Even today, when working parents seek day-care for young children, they turn most often to the family or the extended family for help — older brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, grandparents, close friends and neighbors. Nonetheless, resistance to the idea of paid day-care is fading. Many more parents than in the past believe that paid professionals, with no intimate connections to the family, can provide adequate care for young children.

Public Support for More Centers

7.2.1 Eight out of 10 women and men favor more day-care centers — a dramatic shift in public opinion since 1970 when only six out of 10 women and only half of the men wanted more day-care facilities.

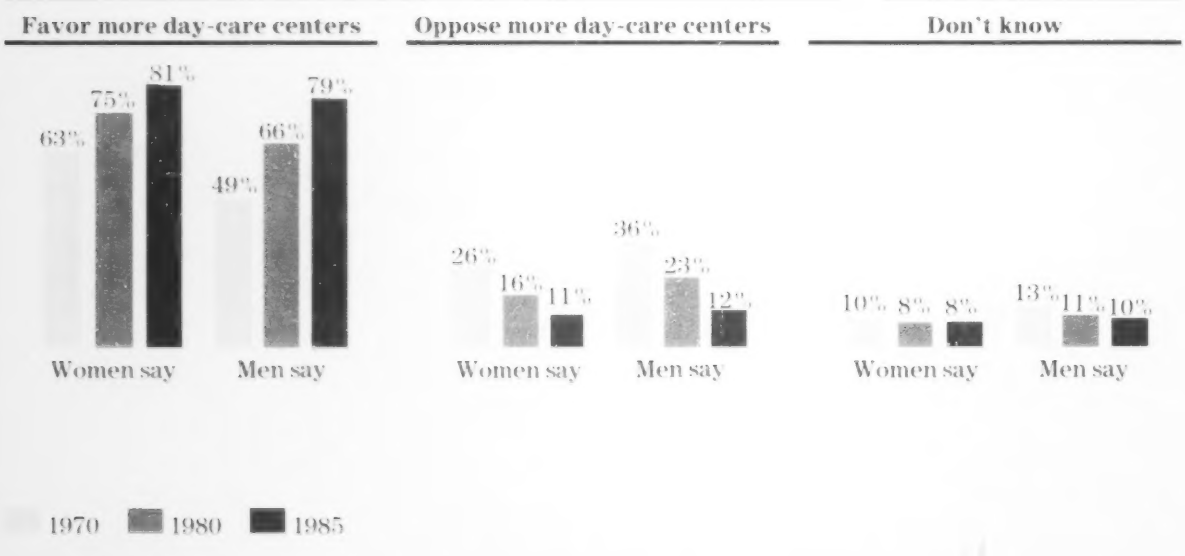
Concurrently, the number of women and men who oppose more day-care centers has dropped consistently over the past 15 years, down 15 points among women and 24 points among men.

In the vanguard of day-care advocacy are women and men who are single, divorced or separated. Of these, 89% of the women and 85% of the men favor more day-care centers. Of women employed full-time, regardless of marital status, 87% agree.

Question:

Turning to another subject, do you favor or oppose the idea of setting up many more day-care centers where mothers could safely leave their children during the day?

TABLE 7.4 ***Public support for more day-care centers***



With More Day-Care, Would More Mothers Work?

7.2.2

If reliable day-care centers were more widely available, would greater numbers of unemployed mothers with young children seek work? If they had a place where they could leave their children, 42% say they would certainly or probably look for work, a jump of six percentage points since 1980. A majority of mothers not currently working — 53% — would not seek work even if day-care were convenient.

Women in households earning less than $15,000 annually are an exception: about 66% say they would certainly take advantage of a day-care center for their children so that they could seek employment for themselves. This compares to the national norm of 42%. Moreover, 45% say that they would "certainly" look for work if more day-care centers were available, about twice the national norm for all women.

Question:

If there were a reliable day-care center which would take care of your children during the day, would you feel certain you would look for work, would you probably look for work, or would you probably not look for work?

TABLE 7.5

With more day-care centers, would more mothers work?

	Not employed	
	1980 Women %	1985 Women %
Certain to look	20	23
Probably look	16	19
Probably not look	56	53
Don't know	8	6

The New Morality

8.1 Over the past 10 to 15 years, Americans have adopted more relaxed attitudes about traditional morality, especially sexual behavior and the degree of independence appropriate for women.

Evolving Sexual Standards

8.1.i Many American women are ambivalent about the new sexual morality and question if it's a change for the better; nonetheless, attitudes are changing. For example, nine out of 10 women now agree that a double moral standard prevails in our society — one set of rules for men and one for women. At the same time, women's attitudes about specific sexual behavior have also changed dramatically in the past 15 years:

- Eighty percent of all women believe that single women should enjoy the same sexual freedom as men, much more than the 58% who believed it 15 years ago.
- Almost half of all women — 49% — still frown on pre-marital sex, but that's 16 points lower than in 1970, when 65% thought it was immoral.
- Half of all women — 49% — now see no reason why single women shouldn't have children and raise them. Only 31% felt this way in 1974.
- Nearly four times as many women now as in 1970 — 42% versus 11% — think that the law should allow adults to have children without getting married.
- Marrying "for the sake of the child" when a single woman is pregnant continues to be viewed as a bad solution by three out of four women.

On most of these issues, men agree with women. The one area where men differ—by three percentage points—is pre-marital sex: a majority (52%) do not think it is immoral, either for men or women.

On the issue of abortion, nearly three out of four women (72%) think that the decision should be left to a woman and her doctor. Women felt the same way in 1974. But very significantly, 40% — slightly less than in 1970 — would repeal laws that have legalized abortion.

Women are divided equally on whether the father should have the right of veto where abortions are legal — 41% agree, 42% disagree. Men support the father's right to veto, 50% in favor compared to 33% opposed.

Question:

Now, turning to another subject, let me read you some statements. For each, please tell me whether you tend to agree or disagree.
(List read to respondent)

TABLE 8.1

Attitudes toward sexual standards and behavior

	1970		1985					
	Women	Men	Women			Men		
	Agree	Agree	Agree	Dis-agree	Don't know	Agree	Dis-agree	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
A double moral standard has existed for many years—one standard for women, another for men	74	69	86	11	3	78	17	5
Society could survive just as well without the institution of marriage	8	10	11	84	4	14	82	4
Single women should not enjoy the same kind of freedom as single men	30	29	16	79	6	18	77	6
Pre-marital sex is immoral	65	54	49	44	7	41	52	8
A couple who are having a child out of wedlock should marry for the sake of the child even though they don't want to	NOT ASKED		19	73	8	22	69	9
It should be legal for adults to have children without getting married	11	13	42	48	10	42	48	10
There is no reason why single men or women shouldn't adopt children and raise them alone if they want to	NOT ASKED		67	25	8	63	29	8
There is no reason why single women shouldn't have children and raise them if they want to	NOT ASKED		49	43	8	48	44	8
Laws making abortions legal should be repealed	45	50	40	47	13	40	46	15
Where abortions are legal, the decision about an abortion should be left up to the woman and her doctor	32	29	72	20	8	68	22	11
Where abortions are legal, the father should have the right to veto	NOT ASKED		41	42	17	50	33	18

Effects of the New Morality

8.1.2

Despite a more permissive stance regarding sexual behavior, most American women are not convinced of the benefits of the new sexual morality.

A large majority of women — 72% — do not agree with the statement that the new morality will make marriages better and more successful. In fact, 61% believe that it will weaken the institution of marriage. Over half (56%) expect the new morality to generate a breakdown in the country's morals. These opinions have changed little since 1974.

In two important areas, however, women see positive benefits. One-third believe that the new morality will help people make better choices of marriage partners, and encourage more honest relationships.

In all these areas, men and women largely agree.

Question:

There is much talk today about the new morality. Many young people believe in and practice sexual freedom, and there is a good deal of speculation as to the effects of this. I'm going to read you some statements that have been made about the effects of the new morality, and for each one, would you tell me whether you tend to agree or disagree with it?

TABLE 8.2

Effects of the new morality

	1974		1985					
	Women	Men	Women			Men		
	Agree %	Agree %	Agree %	Dis-agree %	Don't know %	Agree %	Dis-agree %	Don't know %
It will make for better, more successful marriages	17	21	20	72	8	28	63	9
People will make better choices of marriage partners	28	33	35	54	11	40	49	11
Couples will have more honest relationships with each other	34	39	34	55	11	39	50	11
More people will decide to live together without marrying	73	73	73	20	7	75	19	7
More people will decide to stay single	54	53	55	34	11	54	36	9
The institution of marriage will be weakened	64	61	61	32	7	58	36	6
The country's morals will break down	56	49	56	36	8	48	45	8

Younger women and women who have more years of education are more likely to see the positive rather than the negative side of the new morality. Four times as many young women as those 50 and older think that the new morality will produce better marriages; 70%, compared to 45% in the 50-plus age group, think that people will make better choices of marriage partners and that couples will have more honest relationships. Fewer young women than older women—53% compared to 73%, respectively—think that the new morality will weaken the institution of marriage or that the country's morals will break down—42% compared to 71%, respectively. College-educated women are more supportive of the new morality than women with less education.

Among men also, more favorable views of the new morality prevail among the younger and the better-educated.

TABLE 8.3

Effects of the new morality: breakdown by demographic groups

	Answers of Women							
	Total %	18 to 29 %	30 to 39 %	40 to 49 %	50 and over %	Non-high school grad %	High school grad %	College %
It will make for better, more successful marriages	20	36	21	17	9	17	21	22
People will make better choices of marriage partners	35	50	39	30	23	32	35	37
Couples will have more honest relationships with each other	34	49	35	34	23	33	34	36
The institution of marriage will be weakened	61	53	54	58	73	67	63	55
The country's morals will break down	56	42	50	56	71	64	58	49
More people will decide to live together without marrying	73	76	72	73	72	74	74	72
More people will decide to stay single	55	56	54	49	58	60	56	51

	Answers of Men							
	Total	18 to 29	30 to 39	40 to 49	50 and over	Non high school grad	High school grad	College
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
It will make for better, more successful marriages	28	43	28	26	15	22	31	29
People will make better choices of marriage partners	40	52	41	47	26	35	45	39
Couples will have more honest relationships with each other	39	50	43	43	25	34	43	40
The institution of marriage will be weakened	58	43	56	58	72	66	55	55
The country's morals will break down	48	31	42	42	69	60	46	42
More people will decide to live together without marrying	75	72	77	74	76	75	75	74
More people will decide to stay single	54	53	52	52	58	57	56	51

The evidence that attitudes about greater sexual freedom are becoming more positive is best illustrated in women's answers to a question about sexual freedom before marriage: is it seen as a change for the better, for the worse or are feelings mixed? Most women — 43% — now say they have mixed feelings about pre-marital sex, whereas in 1974, the prevailing view among women was that it was a change for the worse. Further, more women now say that increased sexual freedom is a change for the better — 15% now versus 11% in 1974 — and fewer say it is a change for the worse — 41% now versus 45% in 1974. On this question men's and women's opinions are virtually the same.

Single women, women under 30, college-educated women and women living in the West are the groups most inclined to think that increased sexual freedom is a change for the better; even among these groups, however, the prevailing feeling is ambivalence.

Question:

All things considered, do you think society's more widespread acceptance of sexual freedom for people before marriage is a change for the better, or a change for the worse, or do you have mixed feelings about it?

TABLE 8.4

Attitudes about sexual freedom: breakdown by demographic groups

	Women say				Men say			
	A change for the better	A change for the worse	Have mixed feelings about it	Don't know	A change for the better	A change for the worse	Have mixed feelings about it	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total—1985	15	41	43	2	19	37	43	2
Single	29	24	44	3	30	18	50	2
Married	12	44	43	2	14	45	39	2
Divorced separated	21	28	47	3	20	32	46	2
Widowed	6	54	36	4	6	38	47	9
White	14	41	43	2	19	37	42	2
Black	20	37	40	3	21	36	43	—
18 to 29	23	24	51	2	28	20	50	2
30 to 39	18	34	46	1	21	27	50	1
40 to 49	13	41	44	2	17	35	46	3
50 and over	7	57	33	3	9	59	30	2
Non-high school graduate	10	47	40	3	12	46	38	3
High school graduate	12	41	45	3	18	36	44	2
College	21	36	42	1	23	32	44	1
Northeast	16	35	47	1	46	37	46	2
Midwest	11	43	42	4	17	34	46	3
South	14	48	37	2	18	42	38	2
West	20	31	47	2	25	32	42	2
Total—1974	11	45	38	5	19	39	37	5

A Double Standard for Parents and Children?

8.1.3

Regarding sexual behavior, is there a double standard with one set of rules for parents and another for their children? The answer is "yes"; that double standard, however, is waning. For example: while about 50% of all women believe it's okay for single women to have and raise children, only 15% think it would be acceptable for a daughter. That is twice the number who thought it acceptable in 1974. Further, a majority of all women (56%) would accept it but not be happy about it.

To about one-quarter of all women, an unmarried daughter living with someone outside of marriage is acceptable, more than twice as many who found it so 11 years ago. Almost half would accept it, but not happily.

While three in four women would accept the marriage of a daughter to someone with a different religion, only about one in four would accept a daughter's marriage to someone of a different race.

Majorities of parents say they could not accept it and that it would strain their relationship if their daughter used hard drugs (86%), had a homosexual relationship (68%) or used marijuana (63%). Only in the case of hard drugs have opinions changed since 1974: opposition is stronger.

Neither women nor men appear to have a double standard about their sons' behavior, although they are somewhat more accepting of sons' than they are of daughters' behavior.

Question:

Now, here is a list of things some young people find acceptable today. Would you read down that list, and for each one, tell me for a daughter of yours who had just finished her schooling, whether you would find it acceptable, or accept it but be unhappy about it, or not accept it and have the relationship very much strained as a result? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 8.5

What is acceptable behavior for a daughter?

	1974	
	Women	**Men**
	Find it acceptable	Find it acceptable
	%	%
Marrying someone of another religion	71	73
Moving out and living away from home	63	62
Marrying someone of another race	16	19
Living with someone outside of marriage	11	13
Having a child outside of marriage	8	9
Using marijuana	5	9
Having a homosexual relationship	1	3
Using hard drugs	*	1

	1985							
	Women				Men			
	Find it acceptable %	Accept but be unhappy about it %	Not accept it and have strained relationship %	Don't know %	Find it acceptable %	Accept but be unhappy about it %	Not accept it and have strained relationship %	Don't know %
Marrying someone of another religion	75	21	3	1	75	18	5	2
Moving out and living away from home	78	19	2	1	77	19	4	1
Marrying someone of another race	23	36	36	4	27	32	38	3
Living with someone outside of marriage	26	46	27	2	27	43	29	1
Having a child outside of marriage	15	56	26	2	14	50	34	2
Using marijuana	8	27	63	2	11	28	60	1
Having a homosexual relationship	3	25	68	4	3	19	76	2
Using hard drugs	1	11	86	3	1	9	89	1

*Less than .5 percent

TABLE 8.6 ***What is acceptable behavior for a son?***

	1985							
	Women				Men			
	Find it acceptable %	Accept but be unhappy about it %	Not accept it and have strained relationship %	Don't know %	Find it acceptable %	Accept but be unhappy about it %	Not accept it and have strained relationship %	Don't know %
Marrying someone of another religion	77	19	3	1	79	15	4	1
Moving out and living away from home	84	14	2	—	84	15	1	—
Marrying someone of another race	27	37	33	3	32	32	33	3
Living with someone outside of marriage	28	45	25	2	37	41	20	2
Having a child outside of marriage	15	55	27	2	18	48	32	2
Using marijuana	5	28	65	2	11	24	64	1
Having a homosexual relationship	4	23	69	4	3	15	79	2
Using hard drugs	1	11	87	2	1	9	89	1

The Dating Game

8.2 In areas once considered traditional preserves of the man — like asking for a date and paying for it — both women and men now think that a woman should not be inhibited about calling a man, inviting him out and picking up the tab. Views about appropriate courting rituals differ strongly, however, according to age and, in some cases, between the sexes.

Should a Woman Call a Man for a Date?

8.2.1 Men are very enthusiastic about this idea — 71% favor it against 24% opposed — but women are ambivalent: a bare majority — 51% — approve, while 43% disapprove.

Younger Americans, who do most of the dating, seem perfectly at ease with women taking the lead in dating: 73% of women aged 18 to 29, and 86% of all men in the same age group, approve. On the other hand, 63% of women aged 50 and up spurn the idea. Of men aged 50 and over, however, 50% would like a woman to call for a date, while 42% would not.

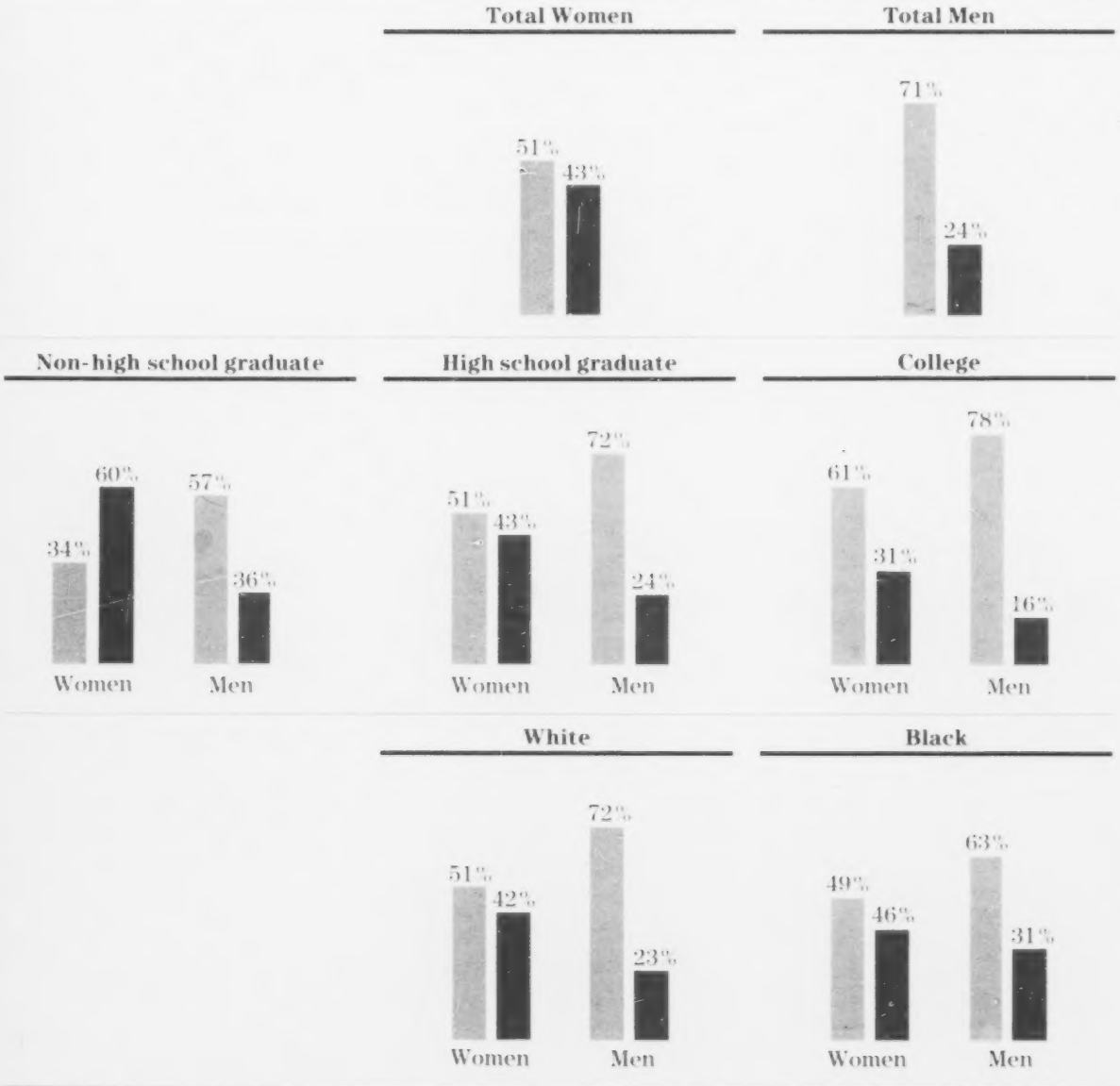
In the South, traditional manners persist. A majority of Southern women reject the idea that women should take the initiative. Southern men disagree, but are more reticent than men elsewhere in the country about being asked out by a woman. Majorities of women in the Northeast, Midwest and West approve of women taking the initiative, and men from these regions agree.

Question:

How do you feel about women calling men for a date—do you approve or disapprove of this?

TABLE 8.7

Should a woman call a man for a date?



Question:

How do you feel about women calling men for a date—do you approve or disapprove of this?

TABLE 8.8

Should a woman call a man for a date? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Women			Men		
	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	51	43	7	71	24	6
18 to 29	73	24	3	86	10	4
30 to 39	59	33	8	77	18	5
40 to 49	49	43	9	74	21	4
50 and over	29	63	7	50	42	8
White	51	42	7	72	23	6
Black	49	46	5	63	31	6
Non-high school graduate	34	60	7	57	36	6
High school graduate	51	43	6	72	24	5
College	61	31	8	78	16	6
Northeast	56	36	8	73	20	7
Midwest	52	40	8	71	21	7
South	41	54	5	64	32	4
West	59	36	5	77	17	6

On a Date, Who Should Pay?

8.2.2

Men's and women's opinions about who should pay for a date flip-flop. A majority of women — 54% — say that whoever asks for the date should pay; only 31% believe the man should pick up the tab in every circumstance. But only a bare plurality of men (42%) think that the person who took the initiative should pay, and 40% think the man should always pay.

Opinions vary widely by age group. Young people are more apt to let the person who proposed the date pay for it, whereas older people tend to stick to tradition. Even though they like the idea of a woman

asking them for a date, men aged 50 and over are especially adamant about picking up the tab. Older women, while more conservative than younger women, are relatively less rigid about the idea that the man should pay.

On a regional basis, Southern women are the most likely to say that the man should pay, though a plurality (48%) agree that whoever made the date should finance it. Westerners, and particularly Western women, are more liberal on this issue than women elsewhere.

Question:

Who do you believe should pay for an evening's entertainment in a dating relationship—the man, the woman, or whoever asked for the date?

TABLE 8.9

Who should pay for a date?
Breakdown by demographic groups

	Women say						Men say					
	Men %	Women %	Whoever asked for date %	Each pay own way %	It depends %	Don't know %	Men %	Women %	Whoever asked for date %	Each pay own way %	It depends %	Don't know %
Total	31	1	54	4	9	1	40	1	42	4	12	1
18 to 29	23	*	65	3	8	1	31	1	50	3	14	1
30 to 39	28	1	58	4	9	*	34	1	50	3	10	1
40 to 49	31	*	53	4	10	1	39	1	43	3	13	1
50 and over	41	*	45	4	8	2	53	1	29	5	10	2
White	29	1	57	4	9	1	40	1	43	4	11	1
Black	48	*	39	3	10	1	44	2	36	4	13	2
Non-high school graduate	46	*	42	3	6	2	52	*	36	1	8	3
High School graduate	31	1	56	4	8	1	41	1	41	4	12	1
College	22	1	62	4	12	1	32	1	48	5	13	1
Northeast	34	1	50	3	12	1	46	1	35	3	13	1
Midwest	27	*	58	4	8	2	41	*	42	3	11	3
South	40	1	48	3	7	1	42	2	43	3	9	1
West	19	—	66	6	9	1	28	—	49	7	14	1

*Less than .5 percent

Why are men more reluctant to let women pay for dates, even though they strongly approve of women initiating dates? It is not because they would be uncomfortable. Sixty-three percent of men, and 68% of women say they would not be bothered if a woman paid for a social lunch or dinner. The age and regional differences previously noted hold true here as well, but on this issue more than on other dating issues, men's and women's opinions are closer.

Question:

When you are having a social lunch or dinner in a restaurant with a woman, would you feel uncomfortable about her picking up the check, or wouldn't this bother you?

TABLE 8.10

Are you comfortable if a woman pays the check?

	Women			Men		
	Feel uncom-fortable %	Wouldn't bother me %	Don't know %	Feel uncom-fortable %	Wouldn't bother me %	Don't know %
Total	28	68	5	34	63	4
18 to 29	22	75	3	24	72	4
30 to 39	23	73	3	27	70	2
40 to 49	27	69	4	37	61	2
50 and over	35	58	7	45	50	5
White	26	70	4	34	63	4
Black	39	55	5	33	64	3
Non-High school graduate	41	53	7	47	49	5
High school graduate	28	68	4	36	61	3
College	18	78	4	23	73	3
Northeast	29	66	5	33	60	7
Midwest	24	72	5	32	64	4
South	35	59	6	36	62	2
West	20	78	2	31	66	3

Women in Social Situations

8.2.3

In social situations, nearly two-thirds of both women and men say that they are as comfortable being with women who work as they are with women who do not. Employed women are generally more at ease with other employed women: 21% of them prefer socializing with other working women, compared to the national norm — 15%. Women who do not hold jobs are somewhat more comfortable in the company of other non-employed women (11%) than are working women (four percent).

A similar pattern holds for men. Men whose wives work are more comfortable socializing with working women than men whose spouses do not work (17% versus six percent). The reverse is also true: 10% of the men whose wives do not work outside the home feel more comfortable with similar women, compared to only three percent of men whose wives work.

Single women — 22% — and women who are divorced or separated — 26% — are the most likely to say that they prefer the company of working women. Among men, the corresponding figures are 18% for singles and 21% for divorced/separated individuals.

Question:

Who do you feel more at ease with in social situations—women who work, or women who don't work, or doesn't that have any effect on how at ease you feel?

TABLE 8.11

Are you more comfortable socially with women who work or with women who don't work?

	Women			Men		
	Total %	Employed %	Not employed %	Total %	Wives employed %	Wives not employed %
Women who work	15	21	8	14	17	6
Women who don't work	7	4	11	6	3	10
No effect	64	63	64	63	68	62
Don't know	14	12	17	17	12	22

Women's Attractiveness

8.2.4

Whether or not a woman is employed has little effect on her social acceptability. What does have an important effect is the degree of self-sufficiency that she projects to others. Majorities of both women (56%) and men (58%) agree that women who are self-sufficient are more appealing — to men and to other women.

Self-sufficiency is seen as a bigger plus among younger women (64%) and men (67%) than among older women (46%) and men (44%). The importance of self-sufficiency as an attractive trait increases with education, and is higher among people who are single or divorced,

separated or widowed than it is among married people.

A self-sufficient woman is seen as more appealing to men by black men and women (64%) than by white people (55% of women, 57% of men).

Question:

In general, whom do you think men find more appealing—women who are dependent on them or women who are self-sufficient?

TABLE 8.12

What kinds of women do men find appealing? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Women			Men		
	Women who are dependent %	Women who are self-sufficient %	Don't know %	Women who are dependent %	Women who are self-sufficient %	Don't know %
Total	33	56	11	33	58	9
18 to 29	29	64	7	27	67	6
30 to 39	31	59	10	25	67	8
40 to 49	31	60	9	34	58	8
50 and over	39	46	15	44	44	13
White	34	55	11	33	57	9
Black	28	64	8	31	64	5
Non-high school graduate	38	49	13	38	52	10
High school graduate	35	54	11	32	58	10
College	28	62	10	32	61	7
Northeast	29	58	12	31	60	9
Midwest	33	55	13	34	57	9
South	37	55	8	35	56	9
West	32	56	12	31	61	8
Single	25	67	8	26	68	6
Married	35	54	11	37	54	9
Separated/divorced	31	59	9	28	65	7
Widowed	33	49	18	41	35	24
Employed (wives employed)	28	63	9	30	61	8
Not employed (wives not employed)	39	48	13	41	49	10

Qualities Admired in Women and Men

8.2.5

Among the top three qualities that women and men admire in others are intelligence, sensitivity to others' feelings and a sense of humor. But when looking at a longer list of personal attributes, some interesting distinctions between the opinions of men and women emerge.

For both women and men, intelligence has long been the quality they admire most in others. Yet for men, the importance of intelligence (in other men and in women) outweighs any other quality. Women, on the other hand, rate "sensitivity to others' feelings" — in both men and women — a very close second to intelligence.

Increasingly, independence is a quality that women admire in other women. The number of women who think independence is an esteemed quality has risen from 24% in 1974 to 36% today, putting it in fourth place. But women do *not* think that independence is a particularly important quality for a man.

For both women and men, self-control is less admired today than in the past. Women in particular are less prone to admire self-control in other women (33%, down from 41% in 1974) or in men (30%, down from 37%). Men also express less admiration for self-control in a woman (26%, down from 37%). But among men themselves, self-control continues to rank as the second most admired quality, after intelligence.

The ability to freely express feelings and emotions is growing more and more important to people of the opposite sex. Among women, for instance, there has been an 11 point increase in the number who admire this quality in a man (from 22% in 1974 to 33% today). Among men, opinions have moved in the same direction: in 1974 only 24% of all men cited the ability to express feelings and emotions as an admired quality in a woman; today, 32% do.

Women are also more admiring of men who are willing to compromise. In 1974, 21% of women saw this as a desirable trait in men; 28% see it that way now.

Gentleness — at least among women — is less of a positive trait today. In 1974, 37% of women cited gentleness as an admirable quality in other women; today, only 27% do. This trend may be the flip side of women's increasing admiration for independence among women. And frankness, at least among men, also appears to be on a downward trend. Twenty-eight percent of all men today, versus 36% a decade ago, seek this quality in other men.

Two of the major differences between the sexes concern leadership ability and sex appeal. In the list of 13 qualities, men rank leadership as the fourth most important quality a man could possess, and sex appeal as the sixth most important quality a woman could possess. Women give low ranks to both leadership ability and sex appeal as desirable qualities in a man or a woman.

Despite these differences, women and men *do* look for the same things in the opposite sex: women admire a man who is intelligent, sensitive, humorous, gentle and able to express his feelings. Men admire a woman who is intelligent, humorous, gentle, sensitive and able to express her feelings.

Questions:

Now, turning to something else, here is a list of different qualities people can have. Would you call off the 3 or 4 you most admire in a man (woman)?
And, which 3 or 4 of those qualities do you most admire in a woman (man)?
(Card shown respondent)

TABLE 8.13

Personal qualities most admired by women and by men

	Qualities most admired in a woman:				Qualities most admired in a man:			
	Women's opinions		Men's opinions		Women's opinions		Men's opinions	
	1974 %	1985 %	1974 %	1985 %	1974 %	1985 %	1974 %	1985 %
Intelligence	57	57	55	55	66	59	66	64
Being sensitive to the feelings of others	52	53	38	39	51	56	36	30
A sense of humor	42	41	38	44	46	44	38	40
Independence	24	36	17	20	19	17	20	21
Self-control	41	33	37	26	37	30	47	44
Being able to express feelings and emotions	25	29	24	32	22	33	16	17
Gentleness	37	27	43	40	44	43	16	15
Frankness, speaking out on opinions	21	24	20	15	18	13	36	28
Willingness to compromise	21	22	25	26	21	28	18	20
Competence	12	14	14	15	11	10	17	22
Leadership ability	11	13	10	9	21	20	36	38
Being competitive	4	7	4	4	3	5	7	13
Sex appeal	5	4	26	31	6	10	2	3

Growing Old

8.3 Among both men and women, attitudes toward aging are very similar: most people agree that the best years in life come before 50.

Age Groups: What Are the Good Years?

8.3.1 Majorities of both women (51%) and men (52%) say that a woman reaches her prime during her 30s. Pluralities of both women (47%) and men (49%) think the same is true of men.

For women, the 20s is the second-best age, according to both sexes. Women believe that the 40s are particularly good ones for a man. Men, on the other hand, prefer their 20s by a slight margin.

A fifth of all Americans say that *all* years are good years.

Questions:

Here are some different age groups. Would you call off all of the age groups that you think are particularly good years for women?
And which age groups do you think are particularly good years for men?
(Card shown respondent)

TABLE 8.14 ***Age groups: what are the good years?***

	Good for women		Good for men	
	Women say	Men say	Women say	Men say
	%	%	%	%
The twenties	43	46	31	40
The thirties	51	52	47	49
The forties	33	28	38	37
The fifties	13	11	18	16
The sixties	7	6	8	7
All of them (volunteered)	20	20	22	23
Don't know	2	4	4	2

Most age groups tend to believe that their current age group is the best, especially in the case of women. Women in their 20s are the most inclined to say that the 20s are particularly good years; women in their 30s are the strongest advocates for their own generation. Men's attitudes are similar: whatever their ages, men say that the age group they are in is the best, for them as well as for women.

On the issue of the best years for a man, differences arise between the sexes. Women in their 20s think that the 30s are the best years for a man. They believe this even more strongly than women who are in their 30s. The same holds true for men: those in their 20s believe more strongly than those in their 30s that the 30s are particularly good years.

Even as the 30th birthday recedes, older women and men are still inclined to say the 30s were their best years.

TABLE 8.15

Age groups: what are the good years? Breakdown by demographic groups

	Good for women				
	Twenties %	Thirties %	Forties %	Fifties %	Sixties %
Total women	43	51	33	13	7
18 to 29	56	54	28	9	5
30 to 39	44	60	31	10	6
40 to 49	39	51	38	12	7
50 and over	33	44	35	19	9
Total men	46	52	28	11	6
18 to 29	62	54	25	9	7
30 to 39	50	58	25	8	6
40 to 49	39	52	36	10	5
50 and over	32	45	29	15	6

	Good for men				
	Twenties %	Thirties %	Forties %	Fifties %	Sixties %
Total women	31	47	38	18	8
18 to 29	40	54	37	17	7
30 to 39	31	52	37	13	6
40 to 49	30	49	43	20	8
50 and over	23	39	37	19	10
Total men	40	49	37	16	7
18 to 29	54	56	35	16	7
30 to 39	46	52	36	13	7
40 to 49	38	50	41	17	6
50 and over	24	40	38	16	7

The Bad Birthdays

8.3.2

Do Americans fear "landmark" birthdays? Majorities — ranging from 54% to 76%, depending on the year — say no. Among both men and women, however, the level of dread about the 50th birthday moves up a few points. After 50, however, succeeding birthdays are viewed with no more dread than the 50th.

Question:

Some people are bothered by certain birthdays. Would you go down this list of birthdays, and tell me whether it was or is one you dread reaching, or one that didn't or doesn't bother you, or one you did or will welcome reaching? (Card shown respondent)

TABLE 8.16

Which birthdays are the most dreaded?

	Women				Men			
	Dreaded %	Doesn't bother %	Welcome %	Don't know %	Dreaded %	Doesn't bother %	Welcome %	Don't know %
30th	14	71	13	2	8	76	15	2
40th	16	68	12	4	11	72	15	3
50th	20	62	12	6	14	68	13	5
60th	19	60	12	8	16	64	14	7
65th	18	57	15	9	15	58	19	8
70th	20	55	15	10	17	54	21	8

	Women					Men				
	Total %	18-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50 + %	Total %	18-29 %	30-39 %	40-49 %	50 + %
30th	14	18	20	15	7	8	9	11	8	4
40th	16	19	23	18	10	11	14	14	8	8
50th	20	26	21	24	13	14	22	17	7	8
60th	19	27	19	17	15	16	25	18	7	9
65th	18	28	18	15	13	15	26	17	6	8
70th	20	28	20	16	15	17	27	19	7	10

Young people are especially prone to view the aging process with greater misgivings. Women and men between the ages of 18 and 29 most dread the arrival of the 50th birthday, and are more pessimistic than older Americans about subsequent birthdays. As people get older, however, their attitudes about approaching birthdays change. More men welcome the 65th and 70th birthday than dread them. The same is not true for women, but the number who welcome the arrival of the 60th, 65th and 70th birthdays is higher than those who welcome the 30th, 40th and 50th.

Majorities of *all* Americans claim that no particular birthday bothers them.

Appendix—Survey Methodology

Sample Size

A nationwide cross section of 3000 women and a control group of 1000 men, 18 years and over, were interviewed for the 1985 Virginia Slims American Women's Opinion Poll.

Sampling Method

All interviews were conducted in person in the homes of respondents, and the work of all interviewers was validated by telephone.

The samples of women and men interviewed in this study are representative samples of the adult female and male populations of the Continental United States, excluding those in institutions like Army camps, hospitals, nursing homes and prisons.

A three-stage, stratified probability sample of interviewing locations was employed.

Stage One — After all the counties in the nation had been stratified by population size within each geographic region, 100 counties were selected at random proportionate to population.

Stage Two — Cities and towns within the sample counties were drawn at random proportionate to population.

Stage Three — Where block statistics within the cities and towns were available, blocks were selected at random proportionate to population; where no statistics were available, blocks or rural route segments were drawn at random.

At the block or route level, a specified method was prescribed for proceeding from the starting household. To ensure proper representation of each group in the sample, quotas were imposed for sex and age levels of respondents, as well as for employed women. To obtain proper representation of male employment, hours for interviewing men were restricted to weekends and after 5 p.m. on weekdays.

The Questionnaire

For the most part, the questionnaires for men and for women were identical. Certain questions, pertinent only to women, were not asked of men. Certain other questions were reworded to take into account the respondent's sex.

Demographic Breakdowns

For most questions, the responses of various subgroups were broken out. The major demographic variables are shown in the table that follows.

Virginia Slims has donated the questionnaire and all data to The Roper Center, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut 06268.

TABLE ***Demographic Breakdown of Sample — 1985***

	Total women	Total men
Number of respondents	3000	1000
Total	100%	100%
Single	14	24
Married	62	62
Divorced separated	12	10
Widowed	12	3
Black	13	11
White	85	86
18 to 29	29	31
30 to 39	20	21
40 to 49	14	15
50 and over	37	33
Under $15,000	33	29
$15,000 to $24,999	27	25
$25,000 to $34,999	21	23
$35,000 and over	19	23
Refused	—	—
Non-high school graduate	24	24
High school graduate	42	36
College	34	40
East	23	23
Midwest	27	26
South	32	36
West	18	17

Note: Responses were computerized and rounded off to the nearest whole percentage. Thus, percentages appearing here and in other tables of this survey may sometimes total slightly less or more than 100.